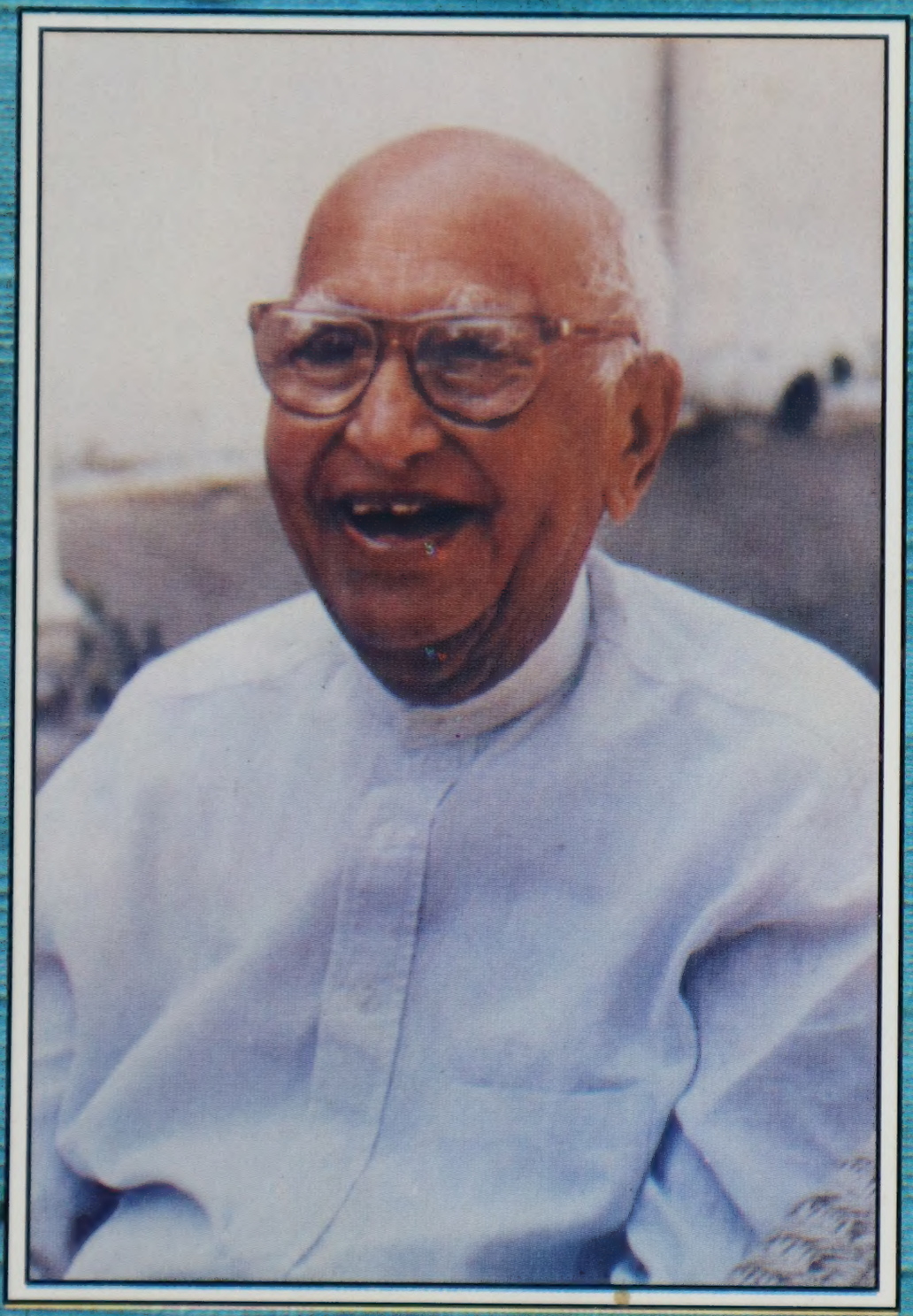
# RASHTRABANDHU

## S.NIJALINGAPPA

# MAN AND STATESMAN



By : -

**Dr. K.Raghavendra Rao.**

Dedicated to people of
FREE INDIA

# RASHTRABANDHU

## S. NIJALINGAPPA

## MAN AND STATESMAN

By

Dr. K. RAGHAVENDRA RAO

SHRI S. NIJALINGAPPA NATIONAL FOUNDATION
Bangalore - 560 001

**RASHTRABANDHU S. NIJALINGAPPA - MAN AND STATESMAN :**
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# One Word

All the trustees of Shri S. Nijalingappa National Foundation are very grateful to late Sri G.B. Mahalingashetty, Vishweshwarnagar, Hubli, one of the trustees, who initiated the idea of bringing out Shri S. Nijalingappa's Comprehensive Biography. Had he been alive he would have been the most happiest person.!

The trustees of Shri S. Nijalingappa National Foundation are also grateful to Shri S. Nijalingappa for his consent to bring out his Biography.

Our thanks are due to Dr. K. Raghavendra Rao, Retired Professor of Political Science, Karnatak University, Dharwad, who has taken keen interest and written the comprehensive and authentic Biography.

We are highly grateful to Sri R.N. Shetty, Managing Director, M/s. Murudeshwar Ceramics, Hubli, who has very generously contributed towards the cost of printing this Biography.

We are very grateful to Shri R. Venkataraman, former President of India, for his valuable foreword which has enhanced the value of the work. Shri R. Venkataraman has regarded Shri S. Nijalingappa as one of the noblest sons of India in his letter dated 10-10-1998.

Shir S. Nijalingappa has practised socialism which advocated by Nehru and others. During 1958 he was appointed as the chairman of the Indian Oil Corporation on a salary of Rs. 10,000/- per month with other allowances. He gladly refused the same and agreed to serve as a chairman on a token amount of Re. 1/- per month. At the same time he told Jawaharlal Nehru that there would be no match between principle and practice while talking of socialism in the Indian context with huge salary being offered.

Thanks to Sriyuths A.R. Badarinarayan, former Education Minister, Govt. of Karnataka. Shamnur Shivashankarappa, Member of Parliament, Y. Ramachandra, Ex-Mayor and Former Minister, Yadalam Gangadhara Setty, Industrialist, R.N. Shetty, Managing Director, M/s. Murudeshwar Ceramics, Hubli, Dr. V.G. Nelvigi, Educationist, Chandrakant Bellad, Member Legislative Assembly, Late K. Abhishankar, Retired Chief Editor, Karnataka Gazetteer and a

Research Scholar and L.S. Chandrashekar, the founder trustees and authors of the Foundation.

Our thanks are also due to (Co-opted trustees) Sriyuths B.S. Muddappa, I.A.S. (Retd.), A.B. Patil, Minister for Mines and Geology, Government of Karnataka, M.V. Rajashekaran, Ex-Member of Parliament, Prabhakar Kore, Ex-Member Parliament (Rajyasabha), Allam Veerabhadrappa, Member Legislative Assembly, Basavaraj S. Bheemalli, President, Hyderabad Karnataka Education Society, Smt. Pratibhadevi Muddappa, Lecturer, H.K.E.S. College, Bangalore, Dr. Mangala V. Betkerur, Canton (USA), Satishchandra Hegde, Contractor, H. Shivalingaiah, Chartered Accountant, Bansi Lal, Chief Minister of Haryana, Sikandar Bakth, Union Minister for Industries, A.R. Antulay, Former Chief Minister of Maharashtra, H.G. Govinda Gowda, Minister for Primary and Secondary Education, Government of Karnataka, S.N. Kiranshankar, Bangalore and Chandrakanth M Setty, C. Udayashankar, B. Veerabhadrappa, N. Thippanna M.L.C. and M.B. Patil Special Invitees for their full co-operation and valuable suggestions and support to bring out this publication.

Thanks to Sriyuths M.B. Patil, Retired Chief Editor, Karnataka Gazetteer, Sri L.S. Chandrashekar (Retd.), Development Officer, Gobar Gas Scheme and Special Officer (Bank Finance), Khadi Board of Karnataka, for Editorial touch-up.

We also thank Sriyuths S.B. Muddappa, I.A.S. Retired, Chief Secretary to Government of Karnataka, K. Chandrashekaraiah, Go.Ru. Channabasappa for their valuable co-operation in this behalf.

Our special thanks are also due to Sri C.R. Gadgoli (Retd.) Superintendent, Department of Education, for going through the proofs meticulously in bringing out this publication.

Thanks to M/s. Sathyasri Printers and Artists for the neat work. Thanks to all those who have contributed their services directly or indirectly to bring out this valuable publication.

Bangalore
Date: 1-12-1998

**A.R. Badarinaryan**
President
**Shri S. Nijalingappa National Foundation**

## FOREWORD FOR THE 2 ND EDITION

The first edition of the biography **"Rashtra Bandhu Nijalingappa"** the man and statesman the renowned Gandhian and the maker of modern Karnataka, was published by the foundation on 26th June 1999. It was well received and much appreciated by the general public as well as press and other medias, within a short period one and a half years, 2000 copies of the book have been sold out. I am happy that now the Foundation is bringing out the 2nd edition of the book. I am highly beholden to the Trustees of the foundation for their keen interest in bringing out the second editions. My special thanks are due to Sri. L.S. Chandrashekar, Trustee and the secretary of the foundation for his deep involvement in this task of publishing the 2nd edition. I am very much optimistic that the Foundation will bring out the Kannada Version, of this great work.

With regards,

**A.R. BADARINARAYAN**
*President*
*Shri S.Nijalingappa National Foundation*
*Bangalore*

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost to the Shri. S.Nijalingappa Foundation, Bangalore and its President, Shri A.R. Badarinarayan, for entrusting me with the challenging task of writing this Biography.

To respected Shri S. Nijalingappa himself for blessing me and generously sharing with me his reflections and recollections.

To Shri L.S.Chandrashekar (Retd), Development Officer, Gobar Gas Scheme and Special Officer (Bank Finance), Khadi Board of Karnataka, providing me with invaluable source material - documents and cassettes which he had collected in such a short time with exemplary devotion and diligence, and late Shri K. Abhishankar, Research - Scholar and journalist, who supplied me with supplementary material and for providing also helpful suggestions.

To Professor A.M. Rajasekharaiah for his kindness in suggesting my name for the task.

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To the authors of published sources, especially Professor D. Javare Gowda, whose Kannada biography is difficult to surpass as a meticulously researched work.

To the authorities of Samyukta Karnataka, for allowing me to consult its precious back-numbers, and to the Librarian Shrimati Roopa Ishannavar and her colleague Shantakka, for providing me with congenial conditions for work.

To my wife, Prabha, and my children and their spouses and their children, for leaving me alone during this "Tapasya".

**K. Raghavendra Rao**

# FOREWORD

The biography of Rashtrabandhu Shri S. Nijalingappaji, Man and Statesman, by Dr. K. Raghavendra Rao is not merely an account of the life and achievements of one of India's noblest sons but also a chronicle of the stirring issues of national importance that Nijalingappaji faced. Unlike the Western statesmen who kept meticulously a diary and left their perceptions of men and matters for the benefit of the posterity, Indian leaders seldom ever recorded contemporaneously with the events their own actions and reactions to them. So when they later write or have their biography written, they express the thoughts and ideas which they hold at the time of writing and not those at the time of occurrence. This has rendered most of those publications of little value. Keeping a diary systematically requires lot of determination and discipline. They have to be recorded before they are effaced or influenced by subsequent events.

Fortunately, Nijalingappaji has kept date-wise a candid account of events that occurred as well as his own reactions at the relevant time. This has enabled the author to reinforce his comments with authentic quotations from the diary.

Nijalingappaji's life serves as an inspiration to younger generation. From the log-house to President of Indian National Congress, he had struggled in life and made a success of it. He wrote to Dr. C.R. Reddi, a well-known educationist of his time and the head of the State Education Department "I come from a far away poor family. I have no support or recommendation of any important person... I passed my Matriculation in first class" and applied for his admission in a college in Bangalore. He graduated and entered the legal

profession. In his days, he could have got a job in the government easily but he preferred the legal profession as it would enable him to devote some time to the service of the country. In those days, he was one of juniors at the Bar who used to help the poor with legal assistance without charging fee. He was thorough and systematic in his work and life, qualities which proved to be great assets in his later life.

By far his greatest achievement was the unification of Karnataka. The Kannadigas were part of Maharashtra, Andhra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The author traces the role of Nijalingappaji in the history of the struggle of the State Congress of Mysore for democratic set up in the Princely State of Mysore and his efforts to unify the Kannadigas dispersed widely in neighbouring States and records that Nijalingappaji was popular with both the Mysore State Congress as well as the Karnataka Provincial Congress Committee.

Nijalingappaji firmly believed in the formation of linguistic states. In this, he had the support of Sardar Patel, Dr Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, the then Congress President, and Kamaraj of Tamil Nadu. The Karnataka Ekikharana Sangha stepped up agitation on a massive scale especially in the border areas of Maharashtra, Adoni in Andhra, Hosur and Kollegal in Tamil Nadu and a few other centres. The State legislatures of Maharashtra and Madras passed resolutions in favour of a unified Karnataka. Nijalingappaji spearheaded the movement. The fast unto death for a separate Andhra Province by POTTI SRIRAMULU who died after nearly 60 days of fast led to unprecedented violence in the entire Telugu - speaking area. It forced the hands of the Central Government to concede the demand. The linguistic states were born on that day.

The author examines three criticisms of Nijalingappaji that had been either overtly or covertly levelled against him in regard to his crusade for a unified Karnataka. One was that Nijalingappaji wanted to establish domination of Veerashaivas in Karnataka and the whole move was communal; the second was that the unified Karnataka move was to capture political power by the Veerashaivas and the third was that Nijalingappaji was hungry for power for himself. The author convincingly debunks these fragile accusations. I would prefer the reader to take the answers first-hand from the author himself.

On the passing of the States Re-organisation Act, the unified Karnataka became the expanded Mysore State and naturally Nijalingappaji assumed the office of the Chief Minister in 1956. But as the author has rightly said that the two periods 1956-57 and 1962-68 when he was Chief Minister of Karnataka should be taken together for an assessment of his contribution to the State of his dream. He settled the territorial disputes with the neighbouring States, integrated the government servants coming into Karnataka and achieved adaptation of Laws of the areas joining the new State with the ease and skill of an expert administrator. He laid great emphasis on development of agriculture, irrigation and power. The Sharavati Project which he master-minded will be remembered as long as the mountains stand and rivers flow in this sacred land of ours. His expertise in Irrigation was duly recognized by the National Development Council by appointing him as Chairman of the Committee to report on Irrigation and water rates problems of the country.

Nijalingappaji's concern for the poor was no facade but was genuine and emotional. His passion for rural industries and village upliftment programme, made a deep impression on the weaker sections of the society. In short, he translated Gandhiji's

ideas into practical programmes. He promoted technical and medical institutions with great zeal and enthusiasm.

In his Atulya Ghosh Memorial Lecture, Nijalingappaji summed up his national economic policy which is perhaps the best exposition of Gandhian philosophy.

The third phase of Nijalingappa's career relates to his critical role in national affairs from 1968 onwards. Though Nijalingappaji's passion was for Karnataka and Kannadigas growth and resplendency, he sacrificed his personal preference in order to shoulder the none too pleasant chores of the Indian National Congress.

The author's account of events starting with Kamaraj Plan (1963) to the present day is truly comprehensive, complete and fascinating.

The suspicion that the Kamaraj Plan was really a Nehru Plan does not bear scrutiny. Kamaraj began to feel genuinely that the concentration of all national leadership and talent on administration had deprived the Congress organisation of leadership and also mass contact. He explained to me this idea and his proposal for some leaders giving up office and devoting their time to organisational work. I was sceptical and I remarked that under his plan, only one person would demit office (meaning Kamaraj himself) and that others would smuggle back to office. It proved to be correct as it was only Kamaraj who resigned from the office of the Chief Minister that did not get back to office. Those who lost office were very bitter with Kamaraj. They told me "Your Kamaraj Plan" is "Yamaraj Plan".

Kamaraj as President of the Congress handled a critical situation following the demise of Nehru. He tackled the situation

skilfully and gave an answer to the global query "After Nehru - Who? and "After Nehru" - What?" When the situation repeated itself in 1966 on the demise of Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, the credit for a smooth orderly and democratic succession of Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister went to him. That Indira Gandhi was the choice of Kamaraj was an open secret. In making his choice, Kamaraj told me that Indira had no regional (north-south) prejudices, had no linguistic chauvinism, had a progressive outlook on economic issues and was a charismatic election winner.

The Congress organisation failed to realise that a contradiction between the office of the Prime Minister and the President of the Indian National Congress was inherent after Independence. During the struggle for freedom, the Congress President, its Parliamentary Board and Working Committee were supreme. But after the emergence of a Prime Minister with enormous patronage, power and resources and Chief Ministers in the States, the centre of gravity had swung towards the latter. Immediately after Independence, Congress President Tandon tried to control Prime Minister Nehru without any effect. Lal Bahadur Shastri who was personally very friendly to Kamaraj, consulted him but made his own decisions on matters related to cabinet formation and administration. Indira Gandhi did not consult the Congress President Kamaraj on the cabinet but only showed him the list on her way to the Rashtrapati Bhavan for submitting the names to the President. Indira Gandhi's assertion of right to choose the President of India and her success in the Presidential election established the supremacy of the Prime Minister over the Congress organisation. Smaller men around her had created an unfounded (in my opinion) apprehension in her mind that Kamaraj would ease her out of office as he had done earlier to Rajaji and others in the Madras State. The strong

dissent of Kamaraj to devaluation of the rupee and his open criticism of the decision further accentuated the difference between them. By the time of the general elections in 1967, the rift between the Prime Minister and the Congress President had become complete.

The defeat of Kamaraj in the elections in 1967 sealed his fate. He had to yield his place as President of the Congress. It was at this juncture that Kamaraj persuaded Nijalingappaji to step into the hot seat of the President of the Congress. Subsequent events have been attractively presented by the author in sequential order.

After the fall of the Janata Government, its defeat in the polls and emergence of Indira Gandhi once again as a powerful figure in the political firmament of India, Nijalingappaji's close associates began to waver and desert him. Veerendra Patil, whom Nijalingappaji nurtured and lifted up in political life, joined Congress (I); S.K. Patil openly spoke of accepting Indira's leadership and merging Congress (O) with her outfit. Kamaraj, the bitterest critic of Indira Gandhi, was to make up with Indira Gandhi in order to fight against his political rival in the Tamil Nadu State. Nijalingappaji alone remained uncompromising. The diary brings out the frustration and sadness that enveloped Nijalingappaji.

It is said that Johnsons are rare but Boswells are rarer still. The author, Dr Raghavendra Rao, belongs to the rarer category. He has succeeded in presenting a true but not an exaggerated picture of that unique being, Nijalingappaji. the Man. Nijalingappaji's simplicity, sincerity, dedication to the service of the country. and his strong adherence to Gandhian philosophy have been brought out with factual illustrations. His

integrity was admitted and praised by even those who opposed him in political bouts.

At 96, Nijalingappaji stands out like role model for politicians to emulate. The "Gandhi Forum" which he heads today tries to spread the Gandhian philosophy of peace, progress and harmony amongst the people of India.

Dr. Raghavendra Rao had done the country an immense service by bringing out a well-documented biography of Nijalingappaji intertwined with the tumultuous histroy of post-Independence India. He deserves the thanks of the nation.

New Delhi
October 25, 1998

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# PROLOGUE

Biography as a form of writing is not part of traditional Indian writing culture. Its highly individualistic and subjectivist focus is alien to our tradition of Apaurusheya or impersonal mode of understanding individual and subjective levels of life. It is essentially an import from the modern Western practice of probing deeply and intensely into an individual psyche. But like everything else it has become globalised, and everybody now writes biographies. Though in non-Western contexts a biography has a perpetual tendency to slide into hagiography. Biography is closer to portrait painting than to photography, since a biographer constructs his subject by foregrounding certain features and details, while relegating to the background or altogether ignoring the others. Hence all biographical exercise becomes necessarily an exercise in choosing a focus, a frame and a perspective into which a mass of details that constitute a life lived, are squeezed with a surgical coolness and detachment. That is why there can be different versions of the same life presented from different perspectives and pre-conceptions. In a sense, this involves the employment of imagination and intuition. In so far as this is true, biography tends to move closer to fiction, but, and this is crucial, unlike in fiction, here imagination can play only within a broad framework of objective and ascertainable facts. A novelist is not hamstrung by any such compulsion whereas a biographer can choose but choose only from a mass of fairly authenticated facts. If a person offers his autobiography, telling his own story in his own words and against the background of his own perspective, then would this make a biography superfluous ? In this case, as a matter of fact, Shri Nijalingappa will soon come out with his own account of his life in English. In a recent

interview with him, I did ask him about this very question. He explained that his story would be a factual account of what happened and of his relations with other historical figures, based on his best recollection. Thus, he did not see any contradiction between an autobiography and a biography, and seems tacitly to recognise that both have a role in offering an objective and reasonable rounded picture of an individual life lived. While an autobiography alone can illuminate certain highly subjective and private aspects of a life, a biography can move beyond the personal and broaden the story to become virtuously indistinguishable from history.

In compiling a biography of a public and historically significant person like Nijalingappa, it is not only impossible but also downright misguided to draw a sharp distinction between history and personal life. The two are so closely intertwined that the biographer must constantly keep in mind the historical import of biographer, must constantly keep in mind the historical import of a personal life and its events. For instance, any biography of a person of Nijalingappa's historical stature will be in a significant sense a contribution to the history of Karnataka region and the Indian nation. In some cases, though not in a particular case of our subject here, a biography will also be a contribution to world history. This is for the simple reason that a history-maker's life will have to be seen as part of a larger history. For instance, in this biography, this larger historical background consists of the history of linguistic federalism and nation-building in India. In an even broader sense, it would be a contribution to the wider story of modernization of India, in whatever sense that loaded and much abused term is apprehended. This same story can be reformulated in terms of the historical agenda of establishing British parliamentary democracy minus the monarchy, a civil

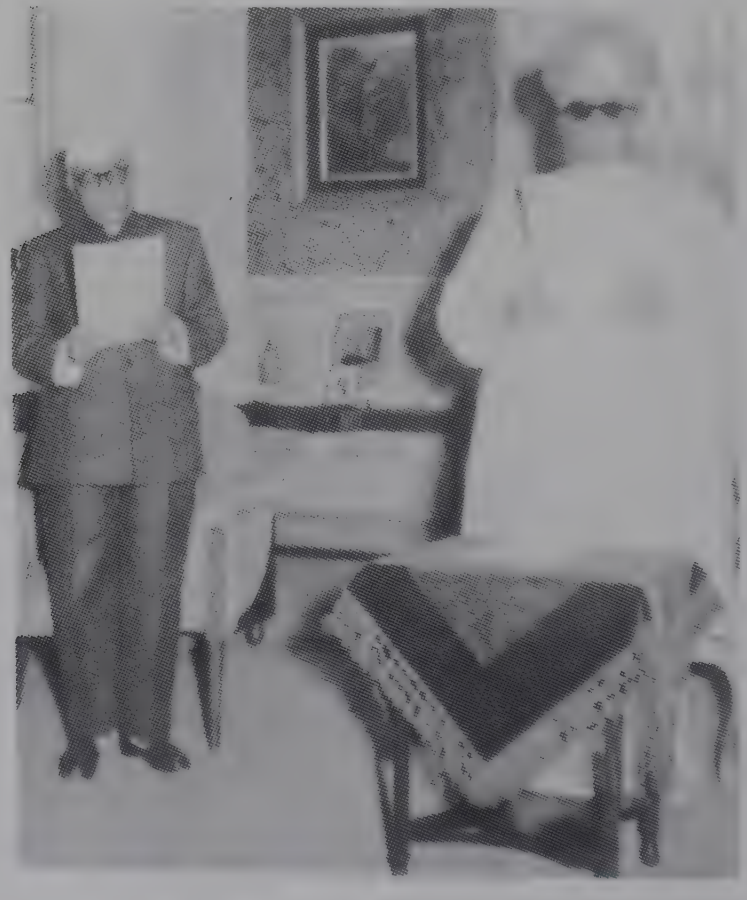
society of the type obtaining in the modern West and an economy that is roughly an industrial, capitalistic order with a system of state controls and licences (also classifiable as a mixed economy, state capitalism or a socialist system at a service of an emerging capitalist system). Of course, the story cannot be this simple and straightforward; otherwise we couldn't have seen the regular explosion of crisis after crisis. The main complication or twist in the story seems to be the challenge posed to this version of modernity by a society with deeply entrenched traditional institutions and values resistant to the project of modernization. The role of Gandhiji or even JP or Ambedkar should be seen as a response to this situation. In his own way, Nijalingappa also exemplifies in his life this central problematic of a politics in which society invades the state while the state attempts, in its turn, to impose on society its project of modernity, largely urban elite inspired with the masses remaining related to this project in a very complex and confused way. Nehru and his generation, which includes Nijalingappa, represent this historical dilemma. Their initial successes seem now to be short-lived, as Nijalingappa himself is well aware of the decline in liberal democratic values and the systematic erosion of the institutional structures built by his generation. But, like a seasoned statesman that he is, also aware that the response should be neither cynicism nor despair but a robust realism and a rejuvenated moral commitment to ideals. That is why, past ninety, the old statesman is full of young ideas and hopes, still striving hard against old age and failing health, to plunge into the unfinished history of creating a modern Indian nation that has worked out an Indian version of modernity. When one sees this energetic old young man continuing his life-task with such depth of commitment, one is reminded of old Russell fighting against the nuclear destruction of mankind or our own old man from Karnataka, Shivaram Karant, fighting to save the earth from thoughtless human greed and cruelty.

In short, this biographer considers his goal to be not only the presentation of an individual personal life but also to show that life as an essential part of an on-going historical process. It is likely, perhaps even certain, that Nijalingappa himself is too modest to trumpet his historical significance. In fact, the old man was modest enough, in a recent interview this biographer had with him, to question the attribution of the title of a statesmen to him. Paradoxically, this natural and innate modesty itself is a proof, if a proof was necessary, that he is entitled to be called a genuine statesman, one who plays politics not for short-term gains but for long-term goals of building a nation and a state envisioned by the generation that built up the nationalist movement under the inspiring leadership of Gandhiji and a whole generation that suffered and sacrificed in that noble but unfinished cause.

# PHOTOS

SAN in a serious mood recollecting the past glory of the United Congress

S.N. in the conference of the Areca Co-operative Marketing Society
at Shimoga with Sri A.R. Badarinarayan



S.N. in the oath taking ceremony from the
Governor Shri Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar

S.N. with family members along with his mother Smt. Neelamma

S.N. with Sir M.V. then PM Jawaharlal Nehru & Governor JC Wodeyar

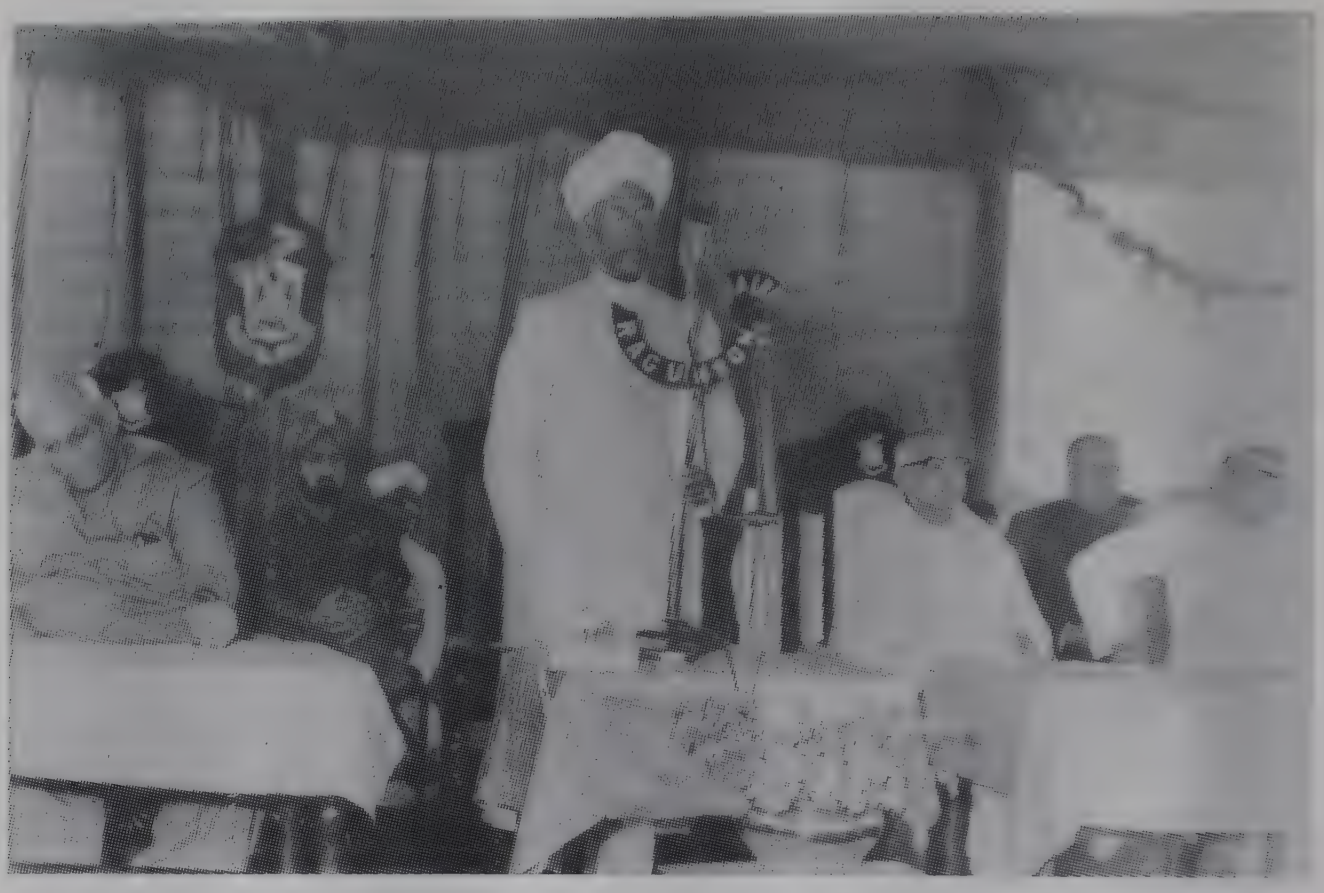
SN with the then President Dr. Rajendra Prasad & Governor JC Wodeyar

SN as Chief Minister Addressing Independence day celebrations

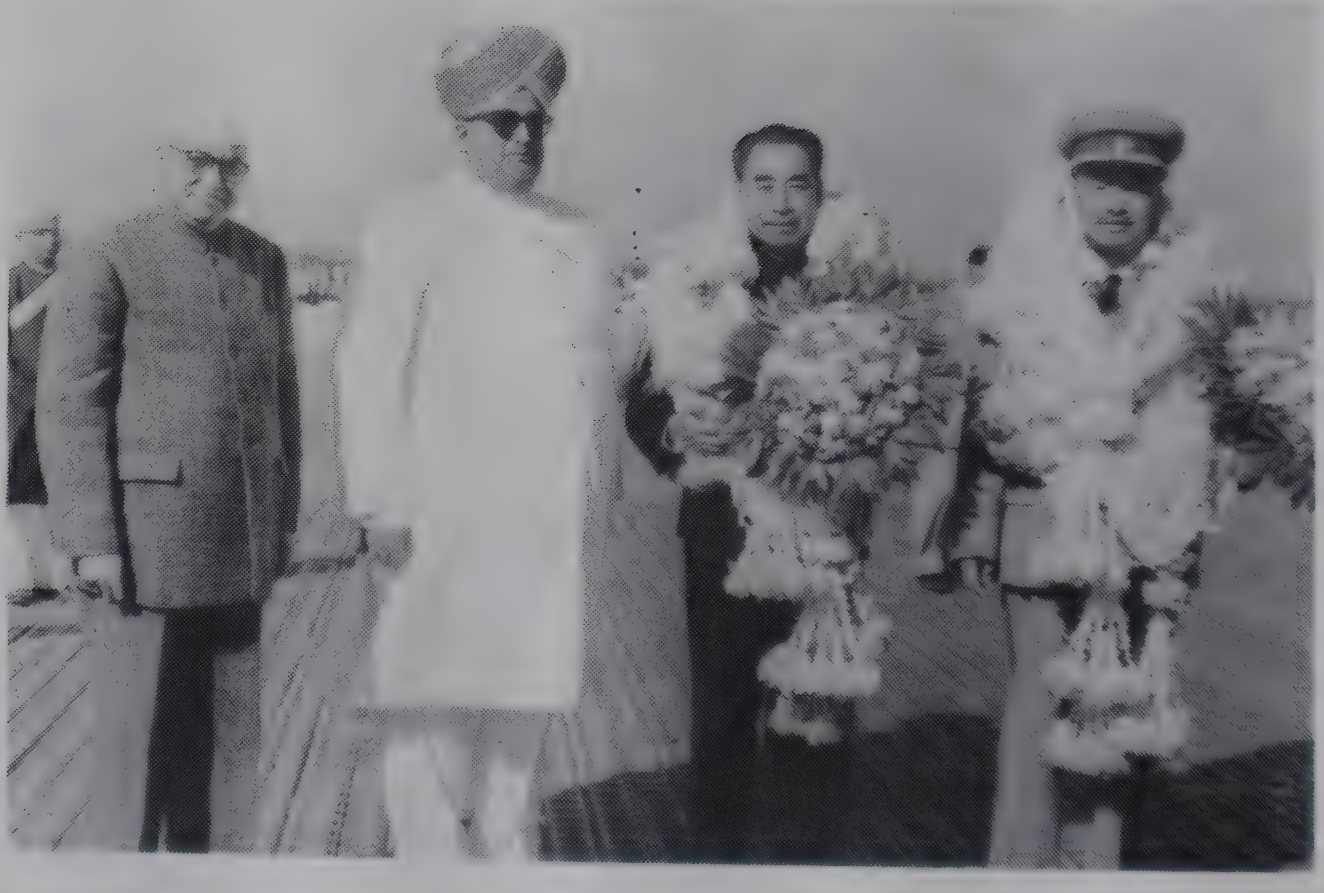
SN at Nandi Hills with the then PM Nehru, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit

SN discussing with Bhoodan Leader Sri Vinoba Bhave at Ilavala, Mysore

SN with Tibetian Dharmika Guru Dalai-Lama



SN with the President Sarvepalli Dr. Radhakrishnan



SN with JC Wodeyar welcoming the then Chaina's PM Chou-En-Lia

CN with his Cabinet colleagues with the then governor Mangala Das Pakvas

SN with the then PM Lalbahadur Shastry and his wife Lalitha Shastry

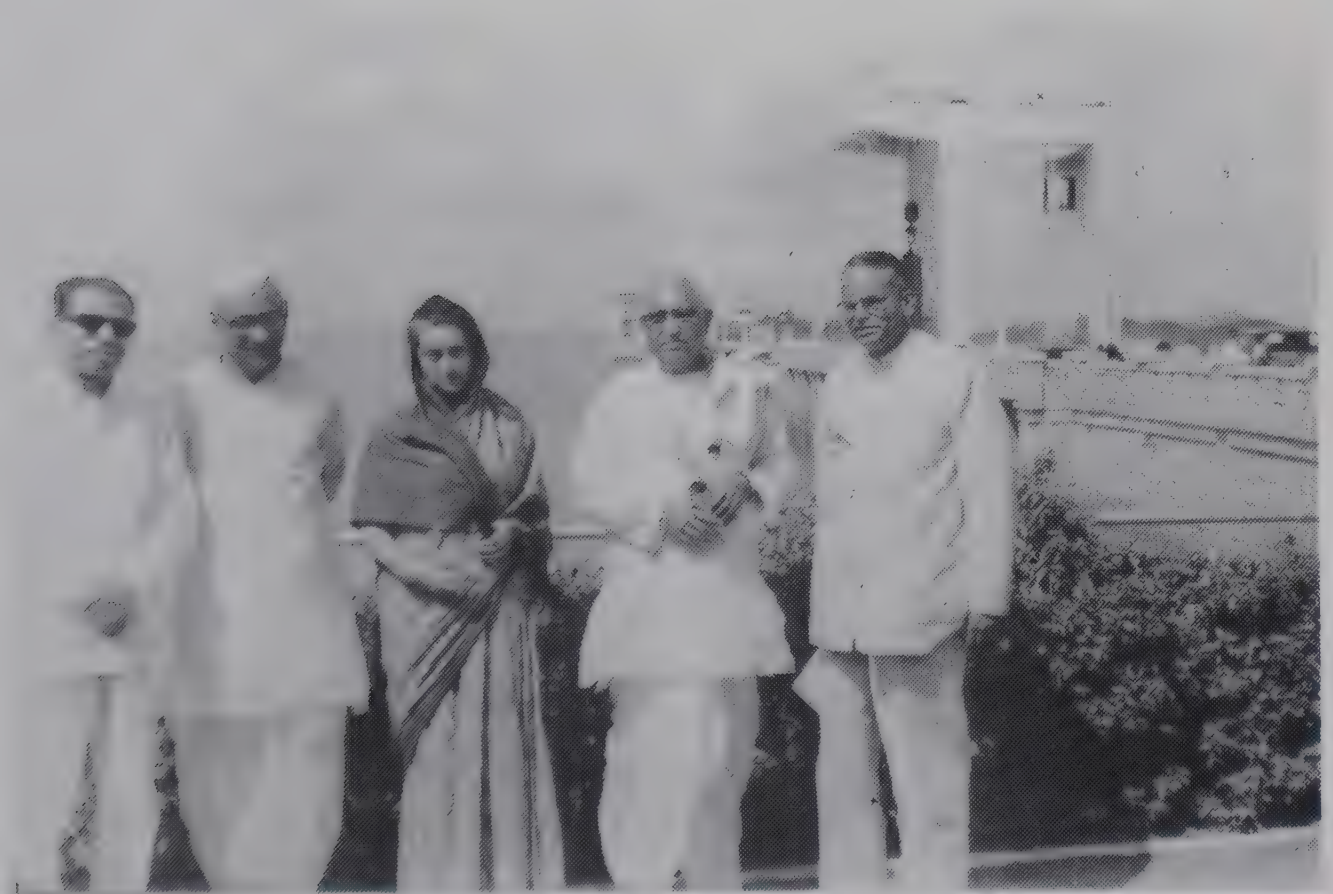
SN Inspecting the construction work of Sharavathi Valley Project

PM Lalbahadur Shastry inaugurating Sharavathi Valley Project along with the then Union Minister KL Rao & American Ambassador

SN with Smt. Indira Gandhi and Smt. Murigamma wife

Unique "Tulabhara" at Bijapur by gold

Unique 'Currency Notes Tulabhara' at Belgaum



Smt. Indira Gandhi, SN, Bhramhananda Reddy,
Veerendra Patil on Tungabhadra Dam Inspection

SN attending convocation ceremony along with Smt Indira Gandhi

SN laid the foundation of a Medical College with Sri SR Kanti

SN Along with Sri Lalbahadur Shastry laying the foundation
stone of Upper Krishna Project

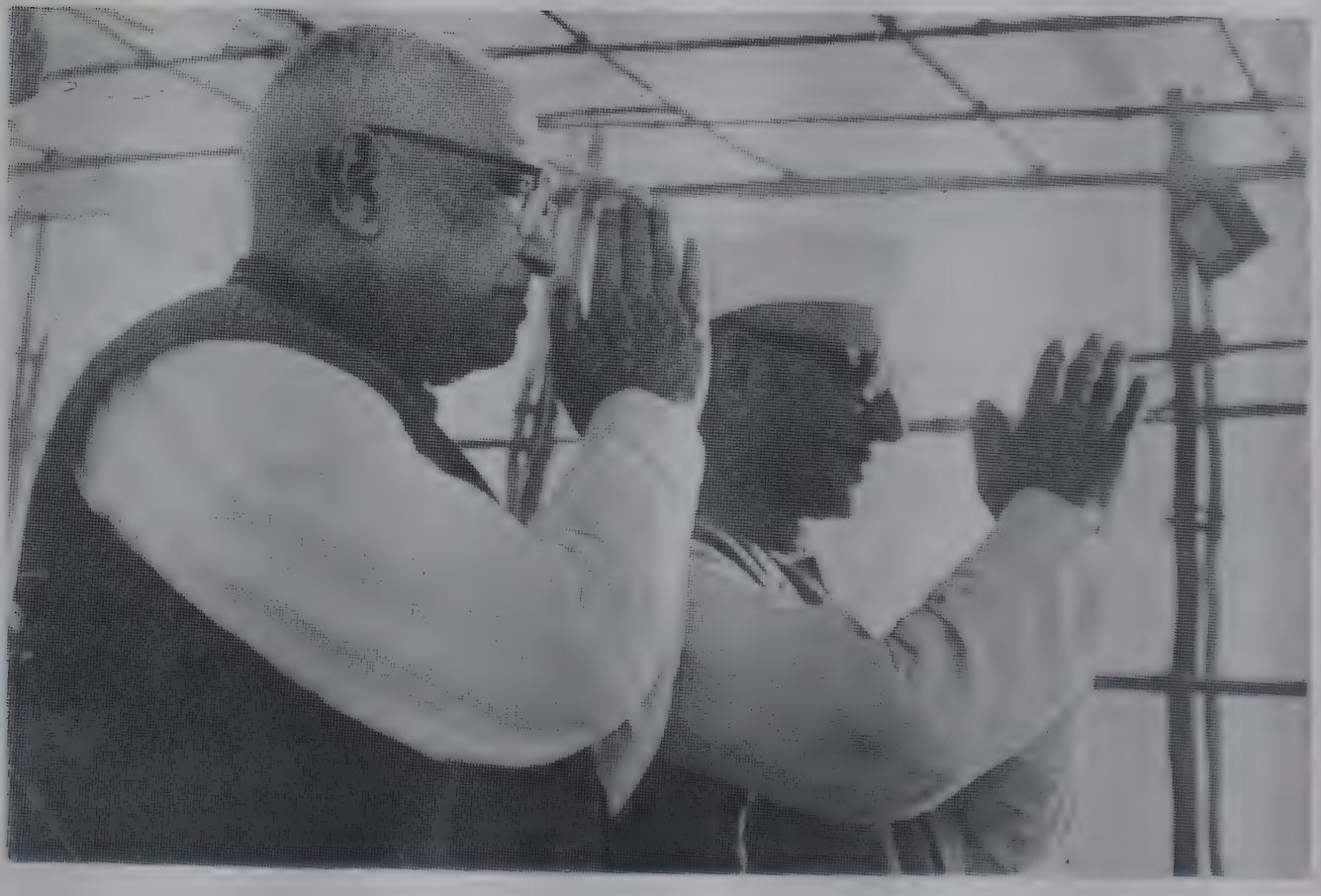
SN along with the then President Zakir Hussain & D Devaraj Urs

SN chatting with Kamaraj Nadar

SN exchanging of greetings with Ramakrishna Hegde

SN receiving foriegn delegates along with the then Governor G. S. Pathak

SN greeting Veerendra Patil on assuming CM's charge along with the then AICC Secretary Shankar Dayal Sharma



SN and Morarji Desai greeting the public

# 1. THE EARLY YEARS

Before starting our account of Nijalingappa's life and work, a very brief background account of his ancestry may be necessary as it situates him in terms of his family history. A family history cannot account for what happens in a subsequent life but it does show that an individual's life is influenced, even if only to a small extent, by his or her family background.

Nijalingappa's ancestors hailed originally from Abbalur, which had a glorious history in the medieval period and which was the birth-place of the great common man's poet, Sarvajna, whose verses have become part of the common language of Karnataka. It was also a centre of Veerashaiva socio-religious and cultural movement. But, as it happens in history, such once flourishing towns suffer subsequent decline and fall on evil days. The declining fortunes of this centre led to large-scale migrations to nearby places in search of better opportunities, and naturally, among the migrants the most important groups were the merchants who, in Abalur, belonged to the merchant caste of the Panchamasali among the Lingayat community. Nijalingappa's ancestors belonged to the prosperous Panchamasali caste, and they, too, migrated to a nearby place, Halavagilu, some eighteen miles from present Harihar town, eight miles from present Harapanahalli town, and nine miles away from present Ranebennur town. Halavagilu is also a place with a great and ancient history. There is a fort near the town and the town was ruled by a Paleyagara or Chieftain during the period of the great Vijayanagar empire. It seems to have been a throbbing centre of the Veerashaiva religious movement which had been led by the great saint and social reformer and poet-philosopher Basaveswara in the twelfth century.

Though the population of Halavagilu was diverse by the presence of different castes like the Gollas, Bedas, Kurubas, Harijans and Besthas, it was dominated by the Lingayat community in terms of power and prestige. Though there is no documentary evidence to prove it, one of the Lingayat families must have migrated from Abalur, as the members of the family are popularly known today as Abalur Settaru bearing the name of the merchant caste. We have clear evidence of the family history beginning from Nijalingappa's grand-father. Though not materially prosperous, Adiveppa and his wife, Neelamma, lived an exemplary and devout Lingayat life. They earned their livelihood by hard agricultural labour. By the time of Adiveppa, the family had declined in terms of material prosperity largely because of its idealistic and ethical commitments. The family refused to follow the other merchant families which pursued the goal of money-making without any regard for moral principles, understandably it paid the price by losing out in the unholy competition. In his adversity, Adiveppa was fully supported by his wife, Neelamma, who was an ideal life-partner. Her father, Hullatti Chennamallappa, was a notable figure in the life of the town, and had a rich cultural and literary background, which included deep acquaintance with the great Vachana literature and the medieval Kannada classic epic, Jaimini Bharata of poet Lakhsmisha. Moreover, he was also an expert in traditional medical lore, and was especially famous for curing such maladies as paralysis, back-ache and arthritis, which had proved beyond the modern medical science. Incredibly enough, he also conducted surgical operations with sharpened stone tools! He treated not only humans but also animals. He also gave religious discourses, which attracted audience from the surrounding villages. Among his other accomplishments was his skill as an actor on the stage. He was

particularly noted for his role as Ugranarasimha, the man-lion, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who vanquished Hiranyakashyapa in order to protect his devotee, Prahlada. All in all, he was an extraordinary person, living full and rich life which served others. In Adiveppa's family, for seven generations there had been a lone male issue and the rest had all been girls. After their first two children, Basappa, a boy and Puttamma, a girl, the third child was expected to be a girl. Belying it, the third child which was born on 10 December 1902, turned out to be a boy! The parents were overjoyed at this unexpected gift. This child was destined to make history by playing a leading role in the twin historical projects of building the Indian nation and Karnataka State as a part of the nation. The religious head of the local Ujjaini math (Monastery) initiated the boy into a regular Veerashaiva life through a ritual which involved the uttering of the Shadakshari formula (Mantra) in the boy's ear, smearing of the sacred Vibhuti (Bhasma) on his forehead and the donning of the Linga, the symbol of Lord Shiva. The boy was named Nijalingappa as desired by his grand-father. The child had a very happy childhood as he became the darling of the whole family being the only baby between the two households. By all accounts, the baby seems to have been uncommonly attractive. He was smiling all the time, thus showing from the early days a cheerful temperament. His aunt, Savakka, was particularly attached to the child.

When he became a toddler, he spent most of his time outdoors, playing with other children in the street. He would ride his father who pretended to be a horse. He was an extrovert child who took active part in all games, and invariably as a leader. Nijalingappa lost his father when he was about six. Though his father had been specially attached to him as the youngest of the three children, Nijalingappa himself does not

seem to have a clear memory of his father. The only memory he carries is that of his sick and dying father. Neither his father-in-law's medical expertise nor his wife's fervent prayers saved Adiveppa from death. The family was left in a none-too-well-off situation. All they had was a small house and three and a half acres of agricultural land. Neelamma had to bear the additional burden of a debt of three hundred rupees, no mean sum in those days. She recovered from total depression, thanks to the encouragement of her father and her own Veerashaiva religious stoicism, and accepted the challenge of bringing up the family. Nijalingppa, remembers her as a very strong - willed woman of independent spirit. She shunned the help offered by other relatives, and single-handed, by dint of physical labour on the small patch of land, struggled hard to bring up her children. Right from the early years, boy Nijalingappa seems to have created an aura about himself. Visiting mendicants and astrologers predicted a regal future for the unusually sprightly and spirited boy. His early schooling had already started before his father's death in a traditional monastic school. He learnt to write the alphabet on sand by making appropriate marks on it. From there he shifted to the temple of Kalleswara, their family deity, for further schooling. For a while he had his schooling in the residence of his teacher, Ettinahalli Ramappa. His record as a student in those early days was spotless as he never gave his teachers any opportunity to subject him to corporal punishment. His devotion to studies, however, did not prevent him from taking an active part in games and physical exercises. He is said to have been a boy dedicated to cleanliness. At home, his education was largely religious and moral, and it was made up of stories from the epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and the life-stories of the Lingayat saints and savants, the Sharanas. In contrast to this rich and imaginative

fare, the formal schooling seemed dry and dull, but his teacher compensated for this by reciting the devotional and moral songs of Nijagunashivayogi, Purandara Dasa and Kanaka Dasa, thus making his educational equipment a catholic one, transcending narrow sectarian boundaries. In contrast to him, the elder brother appeared distinctly unimpressive, and everyone was drawn to Nijalingappa as if by a magnet. As a student, he exhibited a phenomenal memory power. He was a natural boy who was not above boyish pranks. Once he filled his pocket with *Holige* (a sweet dish), and went to school. There he distributed it to the fellow-students, and the whole class began to enjoy the dish by dancing, shouting and laughing. And when the teacher demanded to know who was the culprit who had brought the eatable to the school, Nijalingappa, with characteristic honesty, stood up to own his guilt. Often the boy would visit his friends' homes and enjoy eating the sweets offered there, but his mother would not hesitate to impress on the boy the plight of the family by admonishing him, "Look, my child, it is all right to enjoy the hospitality of your friends, but we must have the strength and resources to reciprocate that hospitality. As you know, we are too poor to return their hospitality." Young Nijalingappa would persist, "But, mother, how can one refuse a hospitality extended with such kindness and affection ?" Neelamma would reply, "Well, think of some excuse. Also do not go out to play with them on festive occasions." The boy would further persist, "But mother, should one resort to lying about such a small matter? After all festive occasions are there for us boys to celebrate with joy. Well, I assure you that I shall do as you have bid, and manage to avoid such visits".

As a boy Nijalingappa lived a life of physical exuberance, and took delight in climbing mango trees, picking berries and

swimming. He also enjoyed roaming around in the nearby hills in the company of his friends. He participated in the weekly Bhajan sessions where devotional songs were chanted. He was keenly interested in body-building and practised wrestling in the local wrestling centre. He was a boy full of curiosity, ever eager to encounter and absorb new experiences. This adventurous lad managed to visit local theatrical performances, especially the staging of the popular story of King Harishchandra, who was a fanatical devotee to truth. These visits involved the crossing of the river Tungabhadra. These adventurous escapades gave his mother many anxious moments. The boy would beg his mother to forgive him, promising her that he would not do such things in future.

One hot afternoon, Neelamma was squatting in the front-yard, deeply worried about the future of her children and her poverty. A mendicant who came to beg, told her, 'Why are you worried, mother ? Your son will become famous one day, and would bring honour to the family. Give him the best education.' That mendicant never turned up again, and Neelamma, with her characteristic faith in God, would sigh, 'Let it be as Lord Shiva wills.' After the death of Adiveppa, it fell to the lot of the grand-father, Chennamallappa, to play the role of the father. He got the children their clothes, took them to fairs and religious meets, and inculcated in young Nijalingappa a deep love for books and learning, as well as an affectionate attitude towards nature. It was from the old man that the grand-son learnt the value of a disciplined and religious life. However, the boy was pained by the slaughter of buffaloes in the name of religion in the local temple of Goddess *Uramma*. Often the sight of blood caused nausea and even made the boy fall down unconscious. The grand-father served virtually as his sole mentor, always advising him, humouring him and cajoling

him. Once he pointed out to the boy a number of male dogs running after one bitch, and used the spectacle to teach him a moral lesson, explaining, 'Look, child, so many male dogs are running after one female dog, and this is called canine brute behaviour. Man is different, and he follows monogamy. Remember, monogamy is the law of nature, a social norm, a secret of culture. If we do not practise it, we will be bringing about social collapse, behaving worse than the dogs !' Such moral instruction moulded the young boy's outlook and personality. But the old man passed away about three years after Adiveppa's death, causing a major tragedy for the family. This left Neelamma to carry on a lone battle to protect and rear her children. Two deaths, following so closely on the heel of each other, especially the death of the grand-father who had loomed so large in the boy's life, had their traumatic effect on young Nijalingappa.

One person who took keen interest in the welfare of the family after the death of Chennamallappa was Davanagere Rudrappa who used to visit the family regularly to enquire about its welfare. He was from Siddavanahalli village but had settled in Davanagere as a merchant. He was the middle one among three brothers, and all the brothers ran the business jointly. Rudrappa was the husband of Neelamma's sister Savakka, and thus an uncle of Nijalingappa from the maternal side. Rudrappa and Savakka had no children of their own, and therefore Savakka suggested to her husband that they should shift Neelamma's sons from Halavagilu where educational facilities did not go beyond the elementary or primary level and promote their educational career. With this idea, they visited Halavagilu one evening and put the proposal to Neelamma. She was torn between three different considerations - separation from her children, dependence on others and the education of her sons.

Savakka urged her sister to send the children to her, especially Nijalingappa who showed great promise. Poor Neelamma spent the whole night crying within herself over the possible separation from her sons. But by the morning she had decided to send them with her sister in the interest of their future career. It was hard for the widow to forget her sons and their pranks. It was hard to be separated from a son whom she fed with milk from her breast for five years. Hard indeed for a mother to be separated from a son who had always slept by his mother's side. It was a great sacrifice but well worth of it as her sons would get good education and could look forward to a good future. After advising Nijalingappa to never abandon the worship of the Linga, never take to evil ways, and to endear himself to his uncle and aunt, Neelamma entrusted her two sons to the care of Rudrappa and Savakka.

Davanagere occupied a central position within the Karnataka region, exhibiting a mixture of the culture and life-style of South Karnataka and North Karnataka. It was a very thriving commercial and trading centre, with a flourishing complex of oil and cotton mills. Its prosperity led to glaring disparities between the rich and the poor. For Nijalingappa it was a radical shift from the calm of rural life to the bustle of urban life. Above all, he missed his mother's protective presence. But then he was aware that he had but one goal in moving to Davanagere, and that was to acquire education. However, it did not take him long to get adjusted to the new life and new environment. The first thing he did on reaching Davanagere was to join the Anglo-vernacular school as a student of the second standard. He was an exemplary student who never missed a class and never went late to any class. Right from the early days he was devoted to cleanliness, and he also took good care of his physical well-being and health. With others

he behaved in a friendly fashion and never indulged in juvenile fights. The early training in disciplined life under his mother and grand-father now stood him in good stead. He became the pet of his teachers who pointed to him as a model student to be emulated. During inspections, the teachers were eager to show off their prize disciple who negotiated the questions directed at him with skill and competence. When he was in the sixth standard, Nijalingappa was asked to give a public speech in English during the visit of a higher educational officer. The boy managed to write out some six or seven sentences in simple English, memorised them, and delivered them with courage and confidence. This enhanced his status further in the eyes of his teachers and class-fellows. In fact, from that day onwards, he became a professional thanks-giver during functions in his school and college. He was not a routine student confining himself to prescribed textbooks. He picked up nuggets of knowledge freely from whatever source he could. He attended regularly the concourse of young boys convened every Sunday by the religious head, Mrityunjaya Swami, and soaked himself in the great Vachana poetry. Another religious and moral influence on him was that of Jayadeva Swami.

Thus the boy achieved not only intellectual development but also moral development, which led to the emergence of a rounded character. His aunt, Savakka, grew very proud of him and showered all her affection on him either because she was childless or because he was an extraordinarily bright boy. His uncle, too, was happy with the boy, and his development. There is ā price to be paid for being uncommonly gifted and unusually successful. It was not surprising that other members of the joint family in Davanagere grew jealous of the rise of the boy. Other members of the joint family - that his uncle and aunt disliked the boy, and demonstrated their dislike openly,

shouting at the boy for no reasons and generally showing their hostility. Nijalingappa's response was unruffled respect for his tormentors. This must have further enraged them ! He puts up with all this by concentrating on his studies, seeking pleasure in doing it. Rudrappa who was impressed by the boy's extraordinary abilities wanted him to pass the Lower Secondary examination as early as possible, and put him in a private school by paying his fees. In the Old Mysore State, public schools did not collect any fees from their students. The private school was run by a teacher whose name was Narasinga Rao. The uncle thought that if the boy cleared this examination, he would be in a position to escape from the mental torture inflicted on the boy in the joint-family. Poor Rudrappa felt guilty but he also felt helpless. He did not want Nijalingappa to return to the village and cause his mother, who was scratching a hard life by engaging in agricultural labour, no better than coolie work, further anguish by doing this. As for the other son, Basavappa, this did not matter as the boy showed no promise as a student. The relatives were waiting for an opportunity to punish the boy, which came when Rudrappa had to go out of town, and they seized it to abuse and beat the boy, eventually putting him back in the village. As soon as he returned, Rudrappa rushed to Halavagilu, placated his sister-in-law and brought Nijalingappa back to Davanagere. But such situations were repeated more than once, and Rudrappa thought it best to shift the boy to the house of one Dyavalagi Basappa, where arrangements were made for the boy's lodging and boarding. He bore the entire expense involved in the arrangement.

The headmaster of that private school had the reputation of being one of the best teachers around. This teacher was impressed by Nijalingppa's abilities and took a special liking to the boy. He paid extra attention to the boy's studies. But

he was addicted to drinking and this often came in the way of his functioning as a teacher. There were occasions when, fully drunk even during the day, he would entrust his class to Nijalingappa ! Until the teacher regained his normal consciousness, Nijalingappa would engage the class by asking the students to take some dictation or read out some passages. Quite a few students sought out his help in their studies. He was a generous lad, giving his best to such needy class-fellows. The school was run in the private house of a rich person. One day some miscreants caught hold of the rich man's son, dragged him to the railway lines and cut off his right hand to take his gold wrist bands. Though the school students, led by Nijalingappa, rescued the boy, the boy's father thought that the students were behind the crime. Fortunately, the boy, as soon as he recovered his consciousness, explained to the father what had happened. Pleased, the rich man praised Nijalingappa and his class-fellows. It was second nature with Nijalingappa to put up with any amount of hardship. He was so precocious that he could master a course normally meant to run for three years, in one year, and in 1915 he passed his Lower Secondary with first class. The news that he had scored ninety percent in Mathematics made the boy famous throughout the town. It was treated as an historic occasion, and many local notables came forward to shower on the young scholar their affection and hospitality. Naturally, the happiest were Savakka, Rudrappa and Neelamma.

The Indian nationalist movement which was inaugurated in 1885 by small elite groups in the newly emerging urban centres, was about to enter, around this time, into a new phase, from the petition phase to the phase of non-violent struggle under the leadership of Gandhiji. After successfully organising the struggle of the Indian population against South African colonialism, employing his new weapon of Satyagraha, Gandhiji

had returned to India in 1915, and soon he was to set the Indian National Congress on a radically new path of struggle against British imperialism. It was characteristic of him that before entering the movement he undertook a realistic study of the situation, touring all over the country. His famous speech in 1916 on the occasion of the inauguration of Benares Hindu University gave a new thrust and a new direction to the Congress-led struggle for national independence. The year Nijalingappa moved to Chitradurga for his secondary education coincided with Gandhiji's arrival on the Indian scene. Rudrappa continued to support this part of his education both materially and morally. One Kadappa, a devout person, came forward to accommodate and feed Nijalingappa during his secondary education, relieving Rudrappa of his anxiety and worry. Chitradurga was a far quieter place than commercial Davanagere and thus more congenial for a studious life. It was a place secluded by a range of rocky hills ringing round it, and it had been the historical capital of the chieftain, Madakari Nayaka. Nijalingappa was sensitive enough to absorb the elevated and inspiring ethos of picturesque Chitradurga town. Within a few months of his stay with him, Kadappa, who had been suffering from illness, passed away. Once again Rudrappa bailed him out by placing him with the family of Sahukar Chikkaveerappa. Chikkaveerappa took to the boy as if he was a close kin, and Nijalingappa became a part of the host family. He was given the same affection, solicitude and material comfort as those given to the children of the family. The death of Chikkaveerappa did not create any problem for the young student because the former's son, Veerabhadrappa, continued to offer Nijalingappa the same affection and support. As may be expected, the boy earned the love of his teachers and class-fellows because of his studious nature and his thoroughly gentle behaviour. As usual, his studies were not confined to text-books,

and the boy ransacked the local library for further knowledge, both historical and contemporary. He was a regular reader of the journal, NEW INDIA, edited by the nationalist leader Annie Besant and he also read the speeches of Gandhiji and other national leaders. Though he was yet to become a committed freedom fighter he had already, as a student shown interest in national movement.

Like the other educated persons of his generation Nijalingappa came under the influence of modern Western ideas of rationalism and felt drawn towards social reform based on rational grounds. In his high school days, he once participated in a debate and defended widow re-marriage on the ground of equality between the sexes. His modern rationalism must have been re-inforced, albeit unconsciously, by his Lingayat heritage, especially Basaveswara's ideology of human equality and liberty. His teachers were not persuaded, and persisted in their belief in inequality between the sexes. In a way, it was also an indication of the extent to which modern Lingayats had abandoned the revolutionary humanism of the founder of their sect, Basaveswara. Given his out-door proclivities, it is not surprising that he became a boy-scout. He was a very active member of the organisation, taking keen part in everyone of its programmes. Till then he had no occasion to eat or drink water in a household other than that of his community, the Veerashaiva or Lingayat community. Now as a boy - scout he had to mingle with boys from other castes and communities. For the first time he ate in the house of a non-Lingayat person, his teacher Puri Palyada Krishna Rao. This experience strengthened his belief in the equality and oneness of all mankind. Ever a man who acted out his beliefs, he stopped smearing the traditional *vibhuti* on his forehead. This must have been a very exciting and liberating experience for the young boy. He gave up visiting temples. To appreciate how radical

this transformation was one must keep in mind the fact that he came from a family background steeped in orthodox Lingayat beliefs and practices. Once a European came to visit the local scout unit as a Commissioner. It was a collective occasion when everyone took part in cooking the camp food, and even the Commissioner made his contribution by fetching water in a pot. Some boys refused to eat the food as it was impure, and Nijalingappa was enraged. He shouted at the boys, 'The fact that a high official served us by fetching water made the food more pure. How can it be called impure ? We should emulate him as he has shown the dignity of labour."

He played virtually all the games, and showed the same proficiency in them as in his studies. He played cricket, football and hockey. He was also an enthusiastic participant in gymnastics. After passing his eighth standard with an excellent score, he moved on to the ninth standard, and this meant that he had to offer optional subjects. His first inclination was towards Science and Mathematics, in which he had earlier scored eighty percent. His teacher who was blinded by caste prejudice tried to prevent Nijalingappa from taking these subjects and forced him to take History. Nijalingappa appealed to the headmaster and eventually he got the options he desired. In 1918 the scourge of plague struck Chitradurga, taking toll of countless lives, irrespective of caste, community, sex, socio-economic status or age. Veerabhadrappa's family shifted to Meccapura, three miles away from the town, making it a temporary shelter. As a part of the family, Nijalingappa also went with the family. A month after the shift, Veerabhadrappa and his wife fell ill with influenza. The whole household found itself in the grip of a real scare. Isha, a boy who served as the cook in the family, was also attacked by influenza. Nijalingappa shouldered the responsibility for nursing the sick

boy. The struggle did not succeed in saving his life. Once again boy Nijalingappa found himself crouching under the shadow of death. Nijalingappa had been too young to be affected by his father's death. But this was different, a close encounter with the struggle against death and eventual victory of death ! The experience taught the boy how helpless mortal men are in the face of fate. He continued to take care of the other patients in the family. It was not an easy assignment. He had to walk three miles to go to the hospital and fetch the medicine. He had to prepare their gruel. Moreover he had to see to it that the other members, especially children, were fed. It was characteristic of him that, instead of running off the security of Halavagilu village, he stuck with the ailing family and faced the challenge with grit. It was the year in which influenza was raging all over the country, performing its fierce dance of death. The help he rendered to the family during the days of its distress endeared the boy further to Veerabhadrappa, who was now determined to extend any help to promote Nijalingappa's education.

In early 1918, Nijalingappa himself was attacked by malaria, and this weakened him to such an extent that he had to take a drop in his Matriculation examination that year. Apart from this physical handicap, he was also technically declared under-aged for the examination ! It was just as well because, if he had passed his examination in 1918 itself, it would have been impossible to serve the sick in Veerabhadrappa's family since his further education would have taken him to Tumkur or Bangalore. The following year he took his Matriculation examination, which he passed with first class. In some papers he had solved more than the required number of questions and had scored one hundred and twenty marks of a prescribed maximum of one hundred !

His next destination in search of higher education was either Bangalore or Tumkur. There it was possible to get lodging and boarding in one of the free hostels in these towns, but what about the college fees and the cost of books ? Also his clothes ? Of course, he could look forward to support from Veerabhadrappa and his mother, Veeramma. Some of his well-wishers advised him to give up further studies and take up a job so that he could help his mother. Some others suggested that he could open a small shop and earn money. Such advice threw the boy into confusion, but his inner drive to seek further education triumphed in the end. He was determined, come what might, to pursue his higher studies. As for his mother, she did not hesitate to sacrifice her interest in order to see her son highly educated. She reminded Nijalingappa that it was his father's wish and also his grand-father's hope that he should be educated to the maximum extent. She assured him that she would manage on her own and blessed his project of higher education. Rudrappa, now no longer in a position to offer full help, told the boy that he would do what little he could. Sahukar Veerabhadrappa gave full backing and said, 'Do not worry or feel hesitant to take my help. Do write to me whenever you need money. I can assure you that money will be sent to you forthwith.' When the boy visited Shri Jayadeva Jagadguru to get his blessings, the religious head said, 'We learn that you are a highly intelligent boy. They say that you have passed in the first class. This achievement has brought honour to the entire Veerashaiva community. There is the Gubbi Totadappa's Choultry in Bangalore. You will have all the facilities there. If you were to complete your education and obtain a good degree, you will be an ornament to the Veerashaiva community. This Matha is there to promote the education of bright young people like you. And then the holy man blessed the boy.

Though he was advised to go in for medicine as it would mean an affluent career, Nijalingappa's love for science subjects prompted him to reject such well-meant advice with utmost courtesy. When he applied to the Collegiate School in Bangalore for admission, he was given admission in Tumkur. Even there his lodging and boarding did not pose any problem. Yet it was obvious that Tumkur was no match for Bangalore which was a centre for cultural life and full of opportunities for a young man. He addressed a letter to Dr. C.R. Reddy, then the head of the State's education department, in which he said, "..... I come from a far-away poor family. I have no support or recommendation of any important person. I can only appeal for help to distinguished persons like you and depend on your kindness. I passed my Matriculation in the first class. I love science most dearly. Presently, I have been offered admission in Tumkur. I am unable to adjust to the Tumkur environment. It would help me if I can carry on my studies in the Bangalore Collegiate School. If you can do this, you will have set a village boy on his path of education. If you cannot do this, you will be harming the career of a rural youth ..." Not willing to study in Tumkur, he packed up and returned to Chitradurga. Within a week, he received a communication from Reddy, offering him admission in Bangalore.

Nijalingappa had never before seen such a large city as Bangalore, but once there, he was to find it a most congenial place. He had to travel to Holalkere, the nearest railway station which was thirty miles away from Chitradurga. From there the train would carry the young scholar to Bangalore. After negotiating a pretty rough road, Nijalingappa reached Holalkere to catch the Poona-Bangalore train around midnight. Getting down from the train in the morning the young student walked to the choultry, carrying a small trunk. The food given in the

choultry was barely enough to keep his body and soul intact, but this did not bother the young man bent solely on acquiring higher education. He soon got used to the life in the choultry and found contentment in whatever it offered him. The very same day he got admitted to the entrance class. Those were the days when schools and colleges were not overflowing with students and only a small number of those who were strongly motivated flocked to these institutions. This situation enabled the principal to remember every student's name, and it also made for intensive interaction between the teachers and their students. As a student who had obtained first class, Nijalingappa was able to earn the respect of his teachers and class-fellows. Normally, students who hailed from the rural backwoods found the city too much and very often became a prey to the evils of city life. But Nijalingappa had become seasoned by hardships in early life and he concentrated only on his studies and nothing else. After finishing his entrance examination in 1920, he joined the Central College. Reversing his earlier position, he offered humanities subjects for his optionals. The curriculum, however, did provide some room for natural sciences like Physics and Chemistry. The student habits in those halcyon days were very different from those students of today, who are the victims of countless distractions. When they were not in the class room, they were found either in the library or in small groups discussing seriously intellectual or public topics. They also took part in vigorous physical exercises in the form of games and gymnastics. Nijalingappa succeeded in gaining a good command over English and Kannada languages. Further, contacts with Tamil and Telugu class-fellows enabled him to acquire some knowledge of these languages as well.

On 23 July 1923, the Central College celebrated Tilak Day. Preparations went ahead for the celebration of a nationalist who

had proclaimed that freedom was his birth-right. Prior to the advent of Gandhiji and Gandhism, it was Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai who had dominated the nationalist movement and the Congress organisation. The celebration was expected to boost the spirit of nationalism among the people. After the event, one of the teachers, Maclean, condemned the students in the class for treason and indiscipline. Led by Nijalingappa, the enraged students organised a protest. They sent telegrams to concerned higher authorities, openly condemning the behaviour of the teacher. The protesters succeeded in making the teacher to offer an apology before ending their protest. Nijalingappa himself was perhaps not aware that this incident marked a traumatic turn in his life. He became a regular reader of Gandhiji's YOUNG INDIA and imbibed the Gandhian ideology of Satyagraha. The Gandhi era had dawned on the Indian freedom movement led by the Indian National Congress. The Congress had earlier adopted with little success strategies of peaceful petitioning and occasional acts of violence, but Gandhiji turned the whole movement into a non-violent one. Gandhiji visited Bangalore around this time and young Nijalingappa, like many others, was captured by his charismatic personality. After listening to Gandhiji, he decided to wear nothing but Khadi.

Nijalingappa's first taste of election politics was his attempt to get elected as the Secretary of the Literary Association of Totadappa Choultry. His was a clean and honest fight, but his rival bribed the voters by treating them in a hotel. Nijalingappa's supporters urged him to do the same, pledging their financial backing. He refused to resort to such corrupt practice. This commitment to principled politics based on moral values was to become the hall-mark of his political career subsequently. It so happened that on this occasion he was elected

and the Association flourished during his secretaryship, full of programmes. It was during this time that a vigorous campaign to collect donations to improve the library and reading room facilities was launched. The inmates hailing from Gubbi, the native place of the founder of the Choultry, constituted a majority and they went about claiming that the Choultry was their prerogative. Nijalingappa aruged with them that such narrowness would not help them to build a unified Karnataka and that such narrowness was opposed to the lofty ideals of Basava, the founder of Lingayatism. His arguments had their impact. In early 1923, Nijalingappa was attacked by malaria and this made it difficult for him to complete his B.A. examination. Even though sick, he took the 'A' part of the examination and managed to pass it. But he could take the 'B' part only in the following year in 1924. At the start of the academic year in 1924, he shifted to the Jayadeva Hostel, supervised by K.P.Puttanna Chetty, a former Dewan of Mysore and a notable leader of the Lingayat community. His authoritarian behaviour and his arrogance invited protest from the students. In the ensuing debate between the management and the students, it was Nijalingappa's conciliatory and reasoned position that won the heart of Puttanna, who prophesied a great future for Nijalingappa, after inviting him home and feeding him sumptuously.

The persons who were most happy when he passed his B.A. examination were, as may be expected, his mother Neelamma and his patrons Veerabhadrappa and his family. Nijalingappa was now faced with the question: what next ? Should he stop his education and take up a job or should he think of further professional education ? In fact, apart from taking up employment, he had really two options: go in for a post-graduate course or study law. Both required two years

of further study. And they both needed money. The moral question before Nijalingappa was whether he should put his well-wishers to further trouble? Some of his well-wishers advised him to take up a job since in those days a graduate could easily bag a reasonably good job. He had subjected himself to a Gandhian regimen of dieting, physical discipline and overall moderation in everything. He decided to take up a legal career as it would enable him devote some time to the service of the country. Moreover he had from the early days developed a dislike for government employment. He was aware that a lawyer's life was not very lucrative but then Nijalingappa never sought material wealth as a goal of his life. When he broached his desire to study law, Veerabhadrappa and Shri Jayadeva Mrugharajendra Swamiji came forward to support him financially. Such was the plight of Karnataka in those days that there was no law college in the region and students had to go to Poona or Madras to study law. Rudrappa and other well-wishers in Davanagere collected money and sent him off to Poona. Fergusson College in Poona had great reputation then as a centre for the study of law in the South. Most law students did not attend the classes and got their attendance by proxy. Nijalingappa, as can be expected, never did it willingly, though there were occasions when he had to absent himself because he had financial problems. As usual, he not only studied his legal subjects with devotion but he also read the classics from western intellectual heritage. He also picked up a working knowledge of Marathi. He exercised his body as well as mind. He played cricket and tennis, and attended theatre and listened to programmes of classical music, both North Indian and South Indian. In fact, he became quite a connoisseur of classical music. He also indulged in painting. He was not merely a sportsman in the sense that he played games but he was also a sportsman in life in the sense that he displayed the spirit of sportsmanship

in his life. It was in Poona that he began to study the writings of Gandhiji and he became a virtual Gandhian, following the Gandhian prescriptions with regard to food and other aspects of life.

Most students from Mysore lived in the Yogashrama hostel. There were frequent conflicts between Mysoreans and Marathi students. The tensions reached once such a point of crisis that the inmates from Mysore quit the hostel and started their own Mysore hostel. Nijalingappa took the initiative in this matter and he became its supervisor. They imported a cook from Mysore, Subbanna, and the hostel food acquired local reputation. Under Nijalingappa's secretaryship, the hostel became a vibrant cultural centre, and it staged Kailasam's play TOLLU GATTI. Nijalingappa directed the play and even played the hero's role in it ! He had already learnt swimming in Halavagilu, and now spent considerable time in swimming during the holidays in a tank in the heart of the city. He became a hero when he plunged into the tank to save a drowning boy.

In December 1924, an historic event took place in the town of Belgaum in Karnataka. It was the annual session of the Indian National Congress. In the pre-Independence days, the annual session of the Congress was a genuine national event, not a party congregation that it became after Independence. The Belgaum Congress had the unique distinction of being the only Congress session over which Mahatma Gandhi presided. By this time Nijalingappa had become an ordinary member of the Congress. He was naturally eager to attend the session so that he could listen to the great leaders and especially get a close view of Gandhiji. But there was a delegate fee and then the expenses involved in travel and boarding and lodging. Fortunately, he got the funds to attend the Congress session

from a class-fellow whose father was a wealthy person. The father took both the youngsters to Belgaum to attend the great event. To economise, the two boys decided to share a single admission ticket, each attending it daily for two hours ! There is no doubt that this experience had a profound effect on Nijalingappa and the whole experience of listening to the leaders and the very experience of seeing them physically, must have produced an inner transformation. When he returned to Poona for his studies, the young man behaved as if he had never left the Belgaum Congress! It rang in his ears and it never disappeared from his inner sight. Above all, it was Gandhiji who occupied the centre-stage in this carnival of memories. The Gandhi age had begun in the history of Indian Nationalist movement, and Gandhiji had evolved a vision and conception of Indian nationalism based on the deeper spiritual values of Indian civilization such as truth and non-violence. At a more practical level, this nationalist vision cherished the ideal of India dotted with countless rural republics, each enjoying substantial control over its own life in terms of a consensual framework. To Gandhiji, freedom meant not just political liberation but the construction of a nation with deep roots in its own spiritual and moral traditions. To this day, though he is no blind worshipper of the Mahatma, Nijalingappa remains a profoundly committed Gandhian.

He took his second year examination in law in 1926, and the examination posed no problem since he had mastered all the intricacies of law by studying works even outside the prescribed text-books. His legal education completed, he returned to Chitradurga to take up the legal profession. Some of his friends felt that the profession was perhaps not the right thing for Nijalingappa who was a simple, honest, truthful and straightforward person, an idealist who might not survive the

rough-and-tumble of the legal career as then practised generally! But Nijalingappa did not choose the profession either to make money or score professionally. He chose it because it also provided ample scope for serving the society and the nation. When he returned to Halavagilu to take the blessings of his mother after a sixteen-year absence to pursue his education, his mother's joy knew no bounds as she saw her handsome son, exuding physical and mental vitality. The return of the native was quite an event, and Nijalingappa tried to re-live his early days ! He also remembered gratefully his teachers at the Central College. In his memory, the figure of the Kannada professor, Venkannayya, a giant in scholarship, loomed large. Now he put behind all this past, and embarked on a new path. The golden years of studenthood were over, and now the young man had to live the life of an income-earner and a householder. Now he was in a position to start his own household and family.

This chapter and the next are heavily indebted to Dejagow's biography of Nijalingappa, KARNATAKA ROOVARI, but the material drawn from it has not always been interpreted and presented in the same way.

# 2. THE LAWYER AND HOUSEHOLDER

To launch a lawyer's career, it was not enough to get a degree in law and the Government's licence or Sanad to practise law. One must first sign up and work as an apprentice or a junior under an established lawyer and learn the tricks of the trade. The young law graduate went round in search of a senior with whom he could work as an assistant. It so happened that at that time all the senior and established lawyers in the town belonged to the Brahmin community. The caste rivalries and hostilities between the Brahmins and the Lingayats were pretty sharp, and no Brahmin senior was ready to accept him as a junior. Of course, they would not openly reject him but cook up some lame excuse to say "no" and show their narrow mindedness. Undaunted, the young man, with characteristic courage and initiative, decided to be on his own and risk launching his professional career without the background of a customary apprenticeship. He received his Sanad to practise law in 1926. It so happened that on the very first day of his donning the lawyer's black coat, a client approached him. It was a simple case of recovering a sum of one thousand rupees on the basis of a promissory note. This being his very first case, Nijalingappa did not know how to go about filing the case in the court. A retired clerk of the court helped him in the matter. Nijalingappa's natural fair-mindedness was such that he shared the fees paid by the client with the clerk by offering him five rupees out of the twentyfive received. The clerk, however, felt that he was overpaid for his small service ! Nijalingappa persuaded the old man to accept the money. He spent another five rupees in getting a nameplate written and hung it to the wall of back-yard of Veerabhadrappa's house.

Now that he had become an income-earner in his own right, Nijalingappa contemplated shifting to his own rented house in order to be no longer a burden on his old benefactor Veerabhadrappa. Such was their relationship that Veerabhadrappa resented the move and asked Nijalingappa whether this did not indicate that he no longer wanted to be a part of Veerabhadrappa's family ! After some persuasion, the young man agreed to postpone the idea to the time when he would marry and start his own household ! With characteristic sincerity and commitment Nijalingappa set about organising his new life. He was aware that one could make money through honest and hard work, but in his scheme of things money was a mere byproduct of the pleasure one got in doing one's job. In this, he was doing no more than following the Kayaka ideal of the founder of his sect, Basaveswara. Within a year, the young lawyer blossomed into a master of his profession. This achievement was the fruit of his single-minded devotion to his work. He became a popular lawyer not only through his professional skill and devotion to client's interest but also through his gentle personality, his courteous behaviour and his friendly tone. Such a person could not easily provoke rivalry or hostility. His approach to his work was very ethical and Gandhian, and he shunned the prevailing professional culture of touting, fabricating of witnesses and of building up cases on the foundation of lies and dishonesty. Whenever he found his case weak or defective, he never hesitated to acknowledge it. In fact, he earned the reputation of being a lawyer who fought only for just and legitimate cases. This earned for him the good-will and respect of fellow-lawyers and the bench.

He remained unruffled by the success or failure of his efforts as long as he was satisfied that he had put in his best into a case. Having himself known poverty and hardship, he

always looked upon his clients, especially the poorer ones from the rural areas, with great sympathy, taking from them minimum fees. He also went out of his way to advise poor peasant clients not to squander their hard-earned money on court cases. His relationship with his clients went beyond the lawyer-client relationship, and he would counsel his clients on problems outside the legal assignment! Within some eight months of starting his career, Nijalingappa was able to establish a secure reputation as a lawyer, and his fame seems to have spread all over Karnataka. He was especially reputed as a friend of the poor, who did not extort huge fees from them like the average run of lawyers. He soon acquired another kind of reputation as an eligible bachelor - handsome, professionally successful and well educated ! Parents began to look upon him as an ideal son-in-law and their daughters considered him a most worthy husband ! His friends urged him to put an end to the life of a loner and get married. His mother Neelamma, like a traditional Indian mother, looked forward to getting a daughter-in-law and eventually grandchildren ! She urged him to marry soon and enter the householder's stage of life. His friends went about looking for attractive brides, and finally short-listed four. Nijalingappa took the traditional and orthodox view that a youth did not need to marry the girl he chose but love the girl who became his wife.

Once a few friends managed to take him to the house of a well-to-do person for the traditional exercise of seeing a girl. They were well fed and showered with all honour by the girl's family. Nijalingappa was so dumb in these matters that his friends enjoyed pulling his legs. They asked him whether he liked the girl, and he replied that he had no objection. Then his friends burst with laughter and told him that the girl had no education and that he was poor in judging girls!

Nijalingappa's response was to say, 'Look, we have enjoyed their hospitality which was on a lavish scale. If we were to tell them the girl was no good, wouldn't that hurt the feelings of her parents ?' His friends argued that the fact that one visited a family to see a girl did not mean one had to accept her as a bride, just as a girl did not need to marry every visiting young man ! Nijalingappa told them that he did not favour the idea of running round in search of a wife and visit many houses, and that he would first make a thorough preliminary investigation before deciding to visit the family. Understandably, his friends thought he was a naive person, but they continued the search. They discovered that there was a potential bride in the Bellulli family of Davanagere, and it was a family with an ancient history. They hailed originally from Kembhavi, the place where the great Shaiva saint, Bhoganna, was born and lived. The family deity was God Basaveswara of Kembhavi. The family's religious preceptor (Guru) was the head of the Hirematha monastery in Gudekothe near Kottur in Bellary district of Karnataka. The family had shifted to Davanagere as merchants handling garlic. That was how the family got the surname Bellulli which is a Kannada word meaning literally garlic ! Bellulli Chennabasappa had ten children. Of them Murigemma was the ninth, and she was born on 30 September 1910. She was educated upto Middle School level. When the horoscopes were examined, the astrologer concerned predicted that anyone who married her would attain fame, their house would have three cars standing outside in attendance ! The family was well-known in Davanagere. Nijalingappa's friends advised him to accept her as a bride because she was good-looking, and came from a respectable and prosperous family. The girl had lost her father. Nijalingappa's worry was whether a girl from such a background would accept a poor youth like him. He told his friends that he was not in a position to spend

a lot of money on the marriage and the purchase of gold ornaments. Therefore, he would agree for the marriage if the girl's brother was prepared to have a simple marriage ceremony. The elders of her family assured Nijalingappa that the girl was not interested in gold and that she was keen on an educated husband. They decided to perform the marriages of both Murigemma and her brother Murigeppa simultaneously. Neelamma and Savakka approved the bride, and for the marriage the only ornament Nijalingappa got made was the bridal bracelet, the Mangalya. He was opposed to spending money on gold as a wasteful investment. He was also generally opposed to acquisition of material wealth for its own sake. In general, he did not approve of pomp and ceremony. He considered it more important to live a life of purity, both bodily purity and moral purity. The bride and the bride-groom appeared to be a match for each other. The groom looked impressive with his well-kept donning a ceremonial turban and a coat with collars. The bride made impression with her simple and unadorned beauty. Murigemma who knew only Kannada was straightforward, unsophisticated and well-behaved girl.

Murigemma conformed to the ideal of the traditional Indian wife who is expected to devote herself to her husband and the family. On his side, Nijalingappa proved to be an equally devoted husband, and their mutual love and devotion became the bedrock on which their marital life securely rested. He did not start his household immediately following the marriage, and for a while Murigemma continued to live with her parents in her parental home. This meant that she stayed in Davanagere. Nijalingappa had considerable work in the Davanagere court where he had to appear for his clients. He spent five days in Chitradurga, and went to Davanagere on Saturday early in the morning. The whole of Saturday was taken up with work but

the Sunday was devoted to his wife. Then he returned to Chitradurga on Monday morning. Sometimes his work took him as far as Shimoga. It was only in 1927 that he set up his own household, with his mother as one of its members. The family stayed in the house behind Veerabhadrappa's back-yard. Nijalingappa told Veerabhadrappa that he should take some rent for the building as he was now earning income ! Alternatively he suggested that they should be allowed to shift to another place. Veerabhadrappa's response was in tune with the man's noble character. His reply to Nijalingappa was that unless he or his family had given offence to him, Nijalingappa should stay in their building without rent until he built his own house! This arrangement thus continued.

It was an idyllic household in which Nijalingappa basked in the sunshine of his mother's as well as wife's love and solicitude. It was a happy and contented household as the young lawyer was not after money. His real earning was the affection and admiration of his professional colleagues and his clients. Whenever the young advocate scored a victory in a case, it was an occasion for celebration in the humble household. As the volume of work increased, he took younger apprentices to work in his office. He taught these raw recruits to the profession whatever he knew without reservation. From him they imbibed not only professional knowledge and skill but they also imbibed high standards of professional ethics and an overall humanitarian outlook, especially towards the poor and the needy. This endeared him to the crowd of novices who were trying tō enter the profession. It was characteristic of his fair-mindedness that he paid the understudied for the work they did for him. Within the short period of three years, his monthly income shot up to one thousand rupees, a very sizeable sum when calculated in terms of rupee value today ! But he was

not interested in saving money or making property. Yet he was aware that his growing family needed a house of its own. The family had now become enlarged with the arrival of children. The first-born, daughter Parvati was born in 1928. His first son, Umakant, arrived in 1930. He was followed by the second son, Rajashekara, in 1932. Naturally the family needed much more space than was available. Nijalingappa bought a site in the Venkateswarapura extension area and he got it altered to suit the specific requirements of the family, with particular attention to the supply of light and air. He also got built an outhouse for his out-station clients who otherwise had to spend the night in the open front-yards of strangers' houses. It was a beautiful house, not perhaps luxurious but possessed all the amenities. His mother and wife took pride in keeping the new house clean and tidy. He also gave up wearing foreign-manufactured clothes, and became permanently wedded to Khadi. He regarded Khadi as a symbol of physical and spiritual purity. He never wasted his time in idleness, and occupied himself with some work or other, including gardening. But he did not consider work and legitmate enjoyment of leisure in playing games as antithetical. In fact, he thought they were complementary. To fulfil this need, he joined the local Officers' Club and participated fully in all its activities. He was elected Secretary of the Club. In this capacity, he had to look into the finances of the institution. He was shocked to discover that many members had availed of its facilities without paying the membership fee ! Among the defaulters was even a judicial officer, the Munsiff ! Right from the day he stepped into the Club first, the gentleman had not paid the membership fee even once. Nijalingappa decided that such gross irregularities should not be tolerated, and he set about making things right. He was aware that the concerned officers would be angry with him for asking for the fee. He even suspected that this anger could even

affect his prospects in the court. But he had never been afraid of taking steps when the question of a principle was involved. He sent letters to all members, officials and non-officials, who had defaulted, to remind them of what they owed. He invited the wrath of the Munsiff who picked up a virtual feud with Nijalingappa. The official even threatened revenge ! Nijalingappa immediately convened a meeting of the general body of members and drew its attention to the improper behaviour of the official concerned. The meeting finally passed a resolution condemning the Munsiff. Taking note of this fact, the government transferred the officer to some other place. This may appear to be a small incident but it symbolises a whole personality and character - of a person who would never bow before injustice and wrong no matter who were these culprits. Those who have seen only the softer and gentler side of Nijalingappa often had an occasion to experience his toughness when the question of principle or morals was involved.

The other defaulters paid up the arrears soon after they received the letter. This situation, however, was not as simple as this. The official members argued that the Club belonged to them and that only non-officials should pay for its facilities. This argument also concealed their arrogant claim that they could not be equated with ordinary mortals ! In fact, they even argued that the non-officials should not only finance the Club but that they should also remain grateful to the officials for being allowed the privilege of membership in an Officers' Club! The conflict between the two groups ended in the non-officials leaving the club to start their own club under the leadership of Nijalingappa. But this development caused worry to the president of the officers' Club, the head of the district administration, because their club depended heavily on the support of the non-officials who were permanent residents of

the town in contrast to the officers who were constantly on the move due to official transfers. The district head, the Deputy Commissioner, brought the opposing groups together and succeeded in working out a re-union of the two in the old club. Nijalingappa welcomed the move as he was always for harmony and peace, and resorted to fighting only in an extreme situations involving basic principles. In this, too, he was a true Gandhian, willing to compromise on secondary details while uncompromising on fundamental principles.

Nijalingappa led a highly disciplined life in which his daily activities were systematically arranged and strictly adhered to. His day began with five in the morning and ended at ten in the night. The daily routine was followed with clock-like precision. Nijalingappa who was acutely aware of the value of time never wasted a moment and packed every moment with purposeful activity ! After he finished his morning chores, he entered his office at eight in the morning to start the day's work. Before starting his work proper, he would give a quick glance at the newspapers and offered advice to his juniors. After that he would begin to study his cases. Then there would be interviews with the visiting clients, and after this he would go to the court to take up his clients' cases. If it were a criminal case, then there was every chance of missing lunch ! Then he would get back home around half past four in the evening for tea. He would once again scan the newspapers. This was also the time for relaxation with the family, especially for a chat with his mother and wife. Of course, the children also spent some time with their father. Then he would go round the garden, and by six it was time for the club. There he was a regular tennis player. Though he knew hockey and other games, his favourites were cricket and tennis. After an hour of tennis he played cards for another hour before returning home. After

dinner he relaxed for a while by browsing through an English novel or a play, and read usually till his eyes drooped. In general, by about ten in the night, he called it a day.

He took his mother as his model in his zeal for work and followed the ideal of his grand-father in values and attitudes. His devotion to his mother was almost total, and he very rarely, if at all, went against her wishes. The old lady was old-fashioned and was a staunch believer in orthodoxy and traditional customs. Nijalingappa followed certain rituals and customs, even though he did not believe in them, simply because non-conformity would hurt his mother's feelings. To please Neelamma, everyone worshipped the Linga soon after bath. Nijalingappa believed at this time God but had no faith in ritual worshipping. He believed that God Shiva was omni-present, and there was no need for symbols like the Ishtalinga. He believed in the Upanishadic God who was formless, almighty, indescribable and ineffable. He attached importance to reflection and meditation on the divine. This might enable one to arrive at some understanding of the relationship between man and the divine. This might lead one to perform good deeds, and doing good was the best form of worship one could offer to God ! In an interview he gave to Prof. Javare Gowda on 3 October, 1983, Nijalingappa expounded briefly his position on these deep issues as follows : 'I am aware that an inner force resides in the depth of every entity. When I observe nature I forget myself. I consider myself, after all, as a part of nature. To meditate on nature is also a kind of worship. I lose myself enjoying the wonderful skill of the architect. He is the one who helps us experience the vision of beauty. Occasionally I visited temples simply to please my friends. I joined my palms before the deity also. I also bow with reverence before the saints and great personages. I experience the presence of the divine there. When I visit

Rajaghat, Brindavan, Yedeyur, and Mahadeswara Hills, my inner conscience awakens and I forget the external world !' It is clear that Nijalingappa subscribes to a version of pantheism. Indeed, he saw in his mother the presence of divinity !

His mother was overjoyed at the three grandchildren who arrived in rapid succession, and her love for the daughter-in-law who bore them increased. In one sense, the three main actors in the family an illiterate mother who had battled all her life against poverty, a wife who was slightly educated but beautiful and a husband who had carved for himself a prosperous professional career against all odds and through sheer merit - showed disparities in experience and culture. Yet, they lived together with exemplary harmony as a happy family. But, of course, this was a delicately achieved balance and was liable to break down. On one occasion, a situation arose between the daughter-in-law, (nothing unusual in an Indian joint family), and the older woman and the latter expressed her protest by refusing to take food. Nijalingappa had to exert Herculean effort to persuade the mother to take food. The couple from then on, decided that they should prevent any further recurrence of such crises and agreed to obey the old lady unquestioningly. Thus, the family harmony was restored though it meant self-effacement on the part of the young couple. Nijalingappa's elder sister Puttamma who had married her maternal uncle and Nijalingappa's elder brother, who had little education, shifted with his family to Chitradurga soon after Neelamma's departure from Halavagilu. With financial help from Nijalingappa, his elder brother, opened a small shop for a living. Nijalingappa continued to share his prosperity with his less fortunate elder

brother. In fact, he also brought up Puttamma's eldest son, Basavaraj. Murigemma once suggested that they should think of the future, their children's education and marriage, and therefore save money for the future, even if on a small scale. Citing the vachana of Basaveswara, Nijalingappa admonished her that one should not lose the joy of living today for tomorrow. The wife became silent. But inside herself, she did not cease worrying about her children's future. When she hinted her objection to his generous sharing of his income, especially with his brother, Nijalingappa would answer her with some irritation, 'You haven't understood me in spite of living with me all these years. My elder brother is an unfortunate person. He has no education and has grown up in poverty. It is my dharma to help him. It would also please our mother. I myself have come thus far in life with the generosity of many people. I cannot forget the way I have come to this point. It is not possible for me to refuse to help the poor who seek my help. If they went away disappointed, this will not augur well for our children. The poor are Lord Shiva's representatives. After all, shouldn't what Shiva has given us go back to Shiva? With birth we bring nothing into this world and when we die we take nothing with us'. But Murigemma would persist, "At least, shouldn't we get gold ornaments for our daughters ? Moreover gold would bail them out in times of distress". Nijalingappa told her not to think of future misfortunes when they were doing fine and also reminded her that at the time of their marriage he had expressed to her his dislike of gold ornaments. He concluded that he believed in giving them good education so that they could chalk out their own careers. He added that over-protectiveness would harm the children. Her basic belief in her husband's wisdom would silence her.

It was an open and hospitable house that the Nijalingappa's ran . The expenses of the household increased with the arrival of more children and the demands made on its hospitality by the clients and the free feeding extended to the poor students. Having been himself a poor student maintained on the generosity of others, Nijalingappa was especially sensitive and sympathetic to the needs of poor students. While his earnings were able to meet the mounting expenses, the problem involved more than money. Who was to do the work involved in cooking for a large number, serving them and managing the whole business? Murigemma complained to her husband about this. Nijalingappa made light of the complaint and told her jocularly, 'What would you have done if all these poor students had been your own children ? Moreover why would they have come begging for food if they were not needy ? Also God has given women the magic power to capture and control men ! But I could have seen your point if you had requested for more servants.' The army of servants increased, and the household culture created by Nijalingappa was such that they were treated more as members of the family than as hired workers. Nijalingappa even went to the extent of providing them accommodation. He respected work and workers, and was totally opposed to their exploitation in any manner. He socialised with them and dined with them on festive occasions with ease and grace. Once a servant pestered Nijalingappa to help him get some gift land from the government by mediating with the revenue officials. Nijalingappa refused to do it but, instead, offered him money to buy land in the market ! When the cook died, Nijalingappa personally looked after the funeral ceremony. He never discriminated between servants and masters or between castes and communities. A servant in the household was free to move in any part of the house like any other member. In fact, among the servant class getting employed in the Nijalingappa household

was regarded as the summum bonum of life ! But with this extraordinary solicitude, went an insistence on discipline and devotion to duty. He never tolerated any dereliction of duty or any mischievous behaviour and did not hesitate to punish the guilty. For instance, once he refused to plead for the brother of a servant, who had indulged in making fake currency coins. But eventually after being fully convinced of the innocence of the person, Nijalingappa did not hesitate to reverse his position, and asked a lawyer friend to take up the case.

Perhaps Nijalingappa was literally committed to the great teaching of Basava's vachanas, 'Compassion is the root of all religion !' His heart melted at any sight of innocent and needless suffering. This attitude included compassion for the dumb animals. He could never stomach the sight of naked and skeletal beggars grabbing offal from public dustbins in competition with stray street dogs or of Harijan wretches starving for food. The household had cows and buffaloes to satisfy its need for milk, and Nijalingappa took personal interest in the welfare of these animals. He had made it a law that the servants should not collect milk for the household until the calves had their fill ! He hated the very sight of those who abused animals like monkeys or dogs or bears for their living. He was also full of compassion for the circus animals and could not stand their being maltreated. The plants in the garden also became the object of his solicitude.

Professionally Nijalingappa became a roaring success, and he acquired the reputation throughout the district as the very symbol of the legal profession ! He was regarded with special reverence by the poor clients because he charged them very little or nothing for his services. For instance, a poor client from Molakalmuru village was cheated of his land by a relation but

he had no money to pay for a lawyer. He was advised to approach Nijalingappa. In another case, a person from Challakere, who belonged to the poor Kuruba caste, had mortgaged his property to a wealthy Veerashaiva. The latter was planning to gobble up the property by demanding compound interest on the loan. He, too, was advised to approach Nijalingappa who was known as a friend of the poor, weak, meek and helpless ! But this person was sceptical whether a Lingayat lawyer would take up a case against a Lingayat, especially a rich one. But the advisor explained that Nijalingappa was beyond such narrow caste and communal considerations and that he fought for justice as his sole goal. In fact, the young lawyer had even earned the hostility of some narrow-minded Veerashaivas. He was an extraordinary combination of an expert professional and a humanitarian committed to the cause of justice and welfare of the poor. People around him in the district respected him as much for his legal acumen as for his profound humanism. Contemporaries, according to Prof. Javare Gowda, were unanimous in holding Nijalingappa in high esteem for his forensic achievements. It was customary for the government to pick up lawyers of Nijalingappa's calibre and integrity for positions on the bench. In fact, the government actually tried to entice him away from the bar to the bench, but he spurned it because he was from the very beginning opposed to service under the government. Moreover, in terms of monetary benefit, the bench was no match for the bar. But that certainly was not the reason behind Nijalingappa's decision.

Since later there have been allegations of communalism against him, as, for example, in the case of his espousal of the cause of unified Karnataka as motivated by a desire to establish Veerashaiva dominance, it is very crucial to state here once for all, that he was never a communal-minded person, while

he was a Lingayat in the best sense of that term. He was a rationalist, given to independent thinking, and his brand of Veerashaivism followed the spirit rather than the letter of that revolutionary creed. In fact, Nijalingappa felt unhappy that those who professed Veerashaivism had abandoned in practice the lofty principles and values proclaimed by its founder Basaveswara ! He believed that if one were clear and pure in one's conscience and behaviour, there was no need to prostrate before religious heads or submit to the authority of rulers. He was a staunch opponent of feudal and authoritarian attitudes and behaviour. He was generally opposed to ritualism and ceremony. He was a profoundly convinced democrat and he never showed any interest in the visit of the State's ruler when he visited Chitradurga ! He was a rationalist who subjected tradition and custom to the test of rationality. In 1927, at the Veerashaiva Mahasabha in Bangalore, he moved a resolution in favour of widow re-marriage and thus invited the hostility of the orthodox in Old Mysore area. However, his persuasive reasoning impressed many in the audience.

Considering the fact that the future Nijalingappa was at the heart of regional and national politics, it is surprising that he showed reservations about participation in politics at this stage of his life. When his well-wishers tried to interest him in local politics by asking him to stand for elections to the town Municipal Council, Nijalingappa did not yield to their suggestion. He refused to get embroiled in election politics because he felt that elections involved rivalry, competition and conflict, and this tended to pollute the atmosphere with jealousy and animosity. The local officials who were anxious that Nijalingappa's experience and good sense should be utilised by the municipal administration, nominated him to the council ! Some four months later they felt gratified at their decision

because in these months Nijalingappa worked hard to promote the citizenry. He participated in all constructive programmes, shunning all petty politics. He proved to be a healthy influence in the municipality as his genial and gentlemanly intervention patched up many petty squabbles and brought about an atmosphere of harmonious co-operation. At the same time, he took care to see that this involvement did not affect his professional work. But this was a minor excursion into politics from a placid life in which there was domestic peace, professional success and material well-being. Nijalingappa was not tempted by politics at this juncture because there was nothing politics could offer more than what he already enjoyed. Even the nationalistic movement which was raging in British India had yet to reach the princely Indian states. The rulers of Mysore gave their subjects very little cause for dissatisfaction or disaffection. Thus State politics did not attract his attention.

Though he did not get involved directly in nationalist movement, he did take keen interest in it as an interested spectator. Even as early as 1922, he became a staunch follower of Gandhiji, and studied the Mahatma's writings and activities with intense absorption. In particular, he attempted to grasp the essence of the Satyagraha doctrine. He was all admiration of Gandhiji's call for communal harmony between the Hindus and Muslims. As already indicated, he took an enthusiastic part in the Belgaum session of the Congress in 1924. When Gandhiji was resting for health in Nandi Hills near Bangalore in 1927, Nijalingappa read with religious regularity the daily reports on the Mahatma's health. He took keen interest, though from a distance, in such momentous political developments outside the state as the boycott of Simon Commission, the Nehru Report and the 1930 Lahore session of the Congress which passed the revolutionary resolution on India's republican aspirations.

He was highly captivated by the great success of the Bardoli Satyagraha in February 1928 under the leadership of Sardar Patel. As a boy he had also come under the influence of Hardekar Manjappa, popularly known as Karnataka Gandhi. All this often threw him into a conflict between the desire for a political life and the demands of a professional career. Considering it unwise to ride two horses simultaneously, he decided to stick to his legal career for the time being, and worked hard at it to reach the top. In the meanwhile momentous developments were taking place in the country at large. The Round Table was held in London sans representatives of the Congress and it ended predictably without any tangible result. The British realised that there could be no meaningful political dialogue with Indians without Gandhiji's co-operation. The frail old man in loin clothes was invited to attend the Second Round Table Conference. In the conference, Gandhiji demonstrated his commitment to national unity by opposing the move of separate electorates for the minorities. After his return from London, Gandhiji warned the Government that the Congress might have to start Satyagraha and non-cooperation struggles. The authorities responded by arresting the leaders of the Congress and banning the Congress organization. In 1932 Gandhiji, now behind the bars in Yeravada jail, learnt the disturbing news that the government was contemplating separate electorates for the Muslims and Harijans. He announced a fast-unto-death from 20th September of that year in protest. The whole country was plunged into gloom. Not only the country but the whole world watched the situation. Thanks to the mediating intervention of other leaders and Ambedkar's conciliatory position, the crisis was averted, and the Mahatma's life was saved. The whole country, including Nijalingappa, heaved a sigh of relief when Gandhiji broke his fast by sipping fruit juice. Nijalingappa's desire to become an active Gandhian was

growing all the time but family obligations proved to be a deterrent. He was, of course, not alone in being mesmerised by the Mahatma's charismatic and morally compelling personality. When Gandhiji started the journal, HARIJAN, in 1933, Nijalingappa devoured it as if it were his Bhagavadgita! While at this time he was not ready to become a full-time follower of Gandhiji, he tried to follow the Gandhian prescriptions minimally, especially in the field of personal hygiene and cleanliness. To some extent he also accepted the Gandhian dietary norms.

In 1935, the British announced reforms by offering limited self-government and federalism to Indians. The Congress agreed to participate in the elections held under the 1935 Act, and the Congress won a majority in six provinces and became the party with the largest number of seats in three provinces. As if anticipating our present India, the old man warned Congressmen in office against corruption and misuse of power! When the World War broke out in September 1939, Gandhiji condemned Hitler's inhumanity but he continued to be critical of the British and the Allies for keeping India under political slavery. The Congress under his leadership refused to help in the war effort, and the Congress governments resigned.

When one looks back at Nijalingappa as a lawyer and as a householder, what strikes one is the strength of his personality and character. The narration offered here might appear to be an idealised and romantic picture of the lawyer and householder but this impression would be incorrect, though understandable. Today we have reached such a situation in our national life that it would be impossible to believe that anyone, let alone a lawyer or a politician, can be good and honest. But Nijalingappa was both, and the objective evidence regarding this

is overwhelming. Of course, it is another question whether persons like him can survive in our contemporary public life, dominated by criminals, smugglers, unscrupulous and corrupt politicians. Even though persons like him may not survive, they need not surrender. This is for the simple reason that a nation's character cannot be grasped by focussing too narrowly on the immediate and current happenings. India as a civilisation, if not as a modern nation, has been there for several thousand years with great achievements to its credit. It cannot be written off so easily. At 95, Nijalingappa himself, though dismayed by what he sees around him, is an optimist and he hopes himself to do what little he can to cleanse the atmosphere of corruption and criminality. He is too much of a realist to expect miracles. But realism is no excuse for pessimism and cynicism. Therefore, the picture presented here should be seen as a hopeful pointer to what can be achieved, given the will and the commitment.

# 3. THE PLUNGE INTO NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

It was, of course, not strictly a plunge in the sense of an abrupt and unexpected act, since it had been brewing for quite some time. It was a plunge, however, in the sense that his direct involvement in the political life of the region and the nation marked a qualitative break in the rhythm and direction of his life. Even long before the plunge, he had been won over to Gandhian ideals and had been a keen student of political events around him. There is also evidence at the same time that he made conscious effort to distance himself from active politics. In the beginning he was content to identify himself symbolically with the nationalist movement by extending financial help to the Congress. Apparently, a powerful inner struggle was going on at this time between his resistance to the call of politics and his political inclinations. In fact, it was impossible to escape the compulsions of politics at that historical juncture for any young man with the kind of political knowledge and ideals that Nijalingappa cherished. The whole country was aflame with nationalist fervour. Students abandoned their schools and colleges, lawyers refused to appear in courts, and workers did not hesitate to desert their factories and work-places, all in the name of Indian nationalism and the struggle against imperialism. All this could hardly bypass him, and he was feeling uneasy and guilty that he was not yet part of this larger historical process. It was when he was under considerable stress due to this tension that the president of Mysore State Congress, T. Siddalingaiah , visited Chitradurga to propagate the Congress cause. Siddalingaiah was naturally anxious that a person of Nijalingappa's qualities and character should be

with the Congress. He called on Nijalingappa with his colleagues to persuade this prize catch to join the Congress movement. The president was immediately impressed by the young lawyer during this first encounter. They pleaded persistently to persuade him to join the Mysore Congress. Nijalingappa argued back that he could not abandon the interests of his family which depended on him, and he was ready only to make whatever modest contribution he could to the Congress cause. Siddalingaiah countered this by saying that all great causes required great sacrifice, and that the young lawyer must make the sacrifice. Nijalingappa left the company by saying, "I do not want to get into politics. It is time for me to go to the club to play tennis" Siddalingaiah and his colleagues were too tenacious to leave matters in this state. They followed Nijalingappa to the Club and waited till he finished his tennis. They mounted a second attack on him, but when they found their quarry recalcitrant, they had to leave him alone.

There were pressures from many Congress workers in the region on him to join the Congress, because they saw in him the potential of a great leader. His worry was about the fate of his family if he were to go to jail. Yet when he saw the great sacrifices made by the nationalists in the cause of freedom, Nijalingappa's loner turmoil reached a point of acute crisis. It was at this time that Narayana Rao Hardikar, the founder of the Bharat Sevadal and a prominent Congress leader from Bombay Karnataka region was touring Mysore State to acquaint himself with the political situation there. As part of his programme, he visited Chitradurga, and his main task was to persuade Nijalingappa to join the Congress which was then synonymous with the nationalist movement. Hardikar went round the district in Nijalingappa's company. Hardikar was impressed by the respect accorded to Nijalingappa by the people

everywhere. He told the undecided young lawyer that the country was in the final stage of the battle for freedom and it would soon attain freedom from British control under Gandhiji's leadership. He urged Nijalingappa to come into the movement and be part of the glorious history of Indian nationalist struggle. It was during a dinner at Nijalingappa's house that Hardikar succeeded at last in turning Nijalingappa's mind towards the idea of direct participation in the freedom struggle. Though he had cast the die, it did worry him that the family would have to face severe hardships as a consequence. But he sought support for his tough decision in the teachings of the Gita and the vachanas of Basaveswara which exhorted that one must perform one's duty irrespective of the consequences. Though other nationalist leaders from Bombay Karnataka like Umabai Kundapur and Gangadhar Rao Deshpande visited Chitradurga, the decisive influence on Nijalingappa was that of Hardikar. After Hardikar's departure, Nijalingappa began to take direct interest in Congress work such as membership drive or organisation of constructive programme. In 1936, he reduced his involvement in the professional work entrusting most of his work to his juniors. Prior to 1937, Mysore Congress dominated by Brahmins and elitist groups. Its rival was the non-Brahmin Prajapaksha, which was inspired by the non-Brahmin movement under the Justice Party in the neighbouring British province of Madras. This party posed as a champion of non-Brahmins and non-elite groups, and constituted a serious challenge to the Congress. While the Congress was committed to more radical goals of national freedom and democratic government in the State, the Prajapaksha opted for a responsible government under the Mysore monarchy. But the Prajapaksha was realistic enough to realise that without national independence there could be no responsible government in the state, and that the former goal could be achieved only through the Congress under Gandhiji's

leadership. So the party merged with the Congress. On the part of the Congress, this was even more welcome because Congress was in desperate need of non-Brahmin support. On 17 April in that year, the historic event of merger took place in Chitradurga. Nijalingappa was the chairman of the Reception Committee. The conference itself was presided over by the Mysore Congress leader, K.Chengalraya Reddy, better known as K.C.Reddy.

From 1937 onwards, Nijalingappa opened a new chapter in his life, a complicated chapter in which he had to balance his professional commitment with his political commitment. His house became transformed virtually into an unofficial guest-house for visiting Congress leaders. Once when the Congress leader H.K.Veeranna Gowda was visiting Chitradurga and passing through the street in which Nijalingappa lived, it so happened that the latter was on his way then with his tennis racket to the Club. As soon as he spotted the Congress tricolour flag flying on the car, Nijalingappa knew that the car belonged to a Congress leader and invited the passengers in the car to be his guests ! Then he added that he would return from the Club, after playing just one game and that they should settle down in his house. This was Veeranna Gowda's first encounter with Nijalingappa and he was captivated by the overwhelming warmth of the hospitality offered. More than a match for her husband in the matter of hospitality, Murigemma was there at the door, all smile to welcome the guests. Nijalingappa and Gowda became life-long associates after this. In 1938, Mysore Congress resolved to hoist the Indian national flag near Maddur at a place called Shivapur. The session which passed it was held under the presidentship of T.Siddalingaiah, and it demonstrated how disciplined, dedicated and motivated the Congress was as an organisation in those days. The event was

scheduled to take place in April that year. In spite of the official instructions to disrupt the occasion, the district authorities in Mysore allowed the ceremony to take place peacefully without any friction. Many had expected police firing but no shot was fired and no dead heroes fell. Those who participated in the ceremony, however, were arrested and packed off to the jail. Nijalingappa participated in the meeting of the Mysore Congress which had passed the resolution and even he expected to be arrested but he was left untouched.

The Shivapur incident was a landmark in the history of freedom struggle in a princely Mysore State, and it drew admiration from all over India. This incident scared the government, and pushed it on a path of violent repression, leading to the tragedy of police firing in Viduraswatha in Kolar district. The repressive acts of the government included ban on publications, and imprisonment of leaders. In response, Mysore Congress asked all the elected members of the Representative Council to resign. The impasse between the government and the Congress in the State was broken by the intervention of the AICC which sent its representatives, Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Acharya J.B. Kriplani, to hold discussions with the Dewan, Sir Mirza Ismail. As a result, government agreed to withdraw all repressive measures, release all the political prisoners, and appoint a committee for political reforms which should include representatives of Mysore Congress Committee. Further, it agreed that along with the official Mysore flag, the Congress flag should also be hoisted. Finally, the government agreed to recognise the State Congress as a legitimate spokesman for the people. The government, however, failed to implement these agreements, and, worse, it stepped up its repressive policy, banning all newspapers and journals, and ordering the arrest of the leaders. The Congress realised the futility of dealing with

the government through peaceful and constitutional methods, and resolved to organise a non-violent struggle against the repressive laws and make it part of the larger freedom movement. The struggle was launched by the Mysore State Congress President, T. Siddalingaiah, in 1939, and it led, as was expected, to the arrest of leaders, lathi -charge against non-violent agitators, and firing on crowd trying to hoist the national Congress flag. The whole State of Mysore was aflame with the spirit of revolt. The State Congress took the momentous decision in September 1939 to launch a full-scale campaign of disobedience against the repressive laws. All over the State, laws prohibiting public meetings and hoisting of the national flag, were violated. The Congress President, Siddalingaiah, himself was arrested. It was this struggle that gave Nijalingappa an opportunity to show what a fine organiser and fighter he was. Nijalingappa decided to fight against the provisions of the Forest Act. About ten miles away from Chitradurga, there was a grove of toddy palm trees. Nijalingappa asked his followers to cut down these trees which were the source of toddy supply to neighbouring villages. Wearing a Gandhi cap, he personally led his followers, and carried out the operation in a disciplined and planned manner. He marched to Turuvanur, the place where the palm grove was located, followed by his army, and went on cutting the trees. The operation took place on 18 September 1939, and it included well-known State leaders like Rajashekaraiah and his wife K.Nagaratnamma. The law-breakers were arrested and brought to Chitradurga. They included S.Ranga Rao, Bheemappa Naik and Govinda Reddy. They were charge-sheeted but let out on bail. Nijalingappa had anticipated that he would have to go to jail for a considerable period, perhaps as long as two or three years. This meant that the family was to be left without the regular source of income. It meant abandoning his lucrative

practice and plunging the family into untold material and physical hardships. Nijalingappa was not sure how the family would take it and face the situation. He wondered whether they would be prepared for the sacrifice. He called his mother and wife for a discussion of the situation. In fact, they were well aware of the risk he had taken in cutting the palm trees. He explained to them at some length the kind of hardships they would have to face if he went to the jail. Murigemma, always ready to support her husband in both normal times and periods of crises, had grasped the essence of the situation in her own way. She knew that her husband was carrying out the programme in response to Gandhiji's call and he would be held responsible for its operation as the leader. She also had the feeling that her husband was fighting for a worthy cause. Her answer to her husband's anxious query was, "well, you have so far passed in many tests. Now you have to pass the Gandhi test ! You can go, and we shall somehow manage things and look after the family with whatever savings we are left with." Neelamma was equally supportive. When Nijalingappa went to bed that night, his mind was at rest and he slept well. The following day, as anticipated, early in the morning at four, there was a knock on the door. Everybody knew that it could only be the police. He opened the door and asked the police to wait for him till he got ready. Within a few minutes, he was formally arrested. He was sentenced subsequently to one and half year's rigorous imprisonment. The government took revenge on the villagers of Turuvanur by imposing a heavy punitive tax on them. Thanks to the inspiring leadership of Nijalingappa, the repressive measures of the government had the effect of strengthening the will and determination of the people to continue the struggle. The news about his arrest spread like wild fire in Chitradurga. Some of his old clients and the public of the town promised to support his family by meeting its

expenses. His office was looked after by another lawyer O. Veerabasappa. The Turuvanur story triggered off similar activity of cutting toddy palm trees elsewhere.

Nijalingappa was shifted to Bangalore Central jail on 29th September 1939. There were already other leaders of the movement arrested for the violation of various provisions of the law. The life in the jail was literally hell. They were treated as ordinary criminals, being denied the status of political prisoners. There were no proper toilet facilities and the prisoners had to dig trenches and use them as lavatories. The food was doled out in unspeakably dirty earthen dishes. Every prisoner was required to grind 10 seers of ragi millet before earning his wretched food. The rotties supplied were half-baked and virtually uneatable. Their bedding consisted of just one rough rug. The plight of the inmates cried for revolt. Nijalingappa was the natural leader of the prisoners, and he led the revolt. As a result, some marginal improvements were made. For instance, earthen plates were replaced by aluminium ones. His co-prisoners included such senior leaders as T.Siddalingaiah and T. Subramanyam. The Dewan at the time, Sir, Mirza Ismail, harboured a special hostility against Siddalingaiah and he was believed to have taken sadistic pleasure in hearing about the Congress leader's sufferings ! There was an Indo-Anglian lady-warden in the jail, who was greatly impressed by Nijalingappa's gentle and cultured personality. She often visited him, enquired about his health and generally encouraged him. His popularity among the inmates provoked jealousy among the jail officials and they saw to it that hundred Satyagrahis were transferred to Kolar jail where they were all forced to do hard labour. At the same time K.T.Bhashyam and Hardekar Manjappa were shifted to Shimoga jail while Nijalingappa was moved to Hassan jail.

These developments in the State were condemned by the All India Congress leaders, and Gandhiji, impressed by the largely non-violent nature of the struggle, sent his Private Secretary, Mahadev Desai, to the State to make an on-the-spot study of the situation. The report he received convinced Gandhiji that the Indian National Congress could not disengage itself from the movements in the princely states. He advised Mysore Congress to suspend the Satyagraha, initiate constructive programmes and participate in the ensuing elections. At this time the third annual session of the Mysore Congress under the presidentship of Bhashyam took place in Shimoga and it passed a resolution accepting the suggestions of the Mahatma. As part of the celebrations connected with the coronation of Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, leaders in jails including Nijalingappa, were released on 8th September 1940. This was, however, a small consolation, perhaps not even that, because the government dealt him a far more severe punishment when it took away from him his only source of livelihood by withdrawing through an official order the sanad to practise law, which even the British in India had not done. Setting aside his personal problems, he plunged into the constructive programme of the Congress. During his jail days, he had not only read English novels but had thoroughly studied Gandhiji's writings and imbibed his ideas and ideals. Aware of his potentialities as an ally, the government, in the meanwhile, dangled before him tempting offers to entice him away from the Congress movement. Of course, he unhesitatingly but with utmost politeness, rejected such overtures. With the elections soon to be held for the State Legislatures, Nijalingappa, as a member of the State Congress Parliamentary Board, toured the state as part of the election propaganda. In the elections, the Mysore Congress swept the polls for both the Legislative Houses. Soon after the elections, the State Congress decided to hold its fourth

annual session at Harapura village near Harihar town. It was to be presided over by H.Siddaiah. Nijalingappa became the Chairman of the reception committee. His tireless efforts contributed to the success of the session. Babu Rajendra Prasad attended it as a representative of the All India Congress Committee. Prasad expressed openly his appreciation of the excellent organisational skill displayed and the spirit of discipline demonstrated, and made a special mention of the Chairman of the reception committee, Nijalingappa, in this connection. He repeated it in his report to the Congress Working Committee and Gandhiji. A pleasant surprise at the session was an exhibition of Nijalingappa's paintings and drawings. It evoked universal admiration and Prasad asked him if he was a professional artist ! Nijalingappa explained that he had picked up the art during his stay in the jail and that most of the exhibits, in fact, were executed in the jail. Though Prasad suggested that he should devote more time to his art, it was an impractical proposition. His political life was constantly on the move, spending hardly two months in a year at his own home.

This session of the Mysore Congress gave ample proof that Nijalingappa was an expert organiser and a resourceful leader. Even more importantly it showed that he was popular with both North Karnataka and Old Mysore people. Obviously, this indicated his potentiality to become an all-Karnataka leader, acceptable at the national level as a true representative of the highly fragmented Karnataka region. The main hall of the conference was named after Vinoba Bhave, and the Kannada weekly, PRAJAMATA, reporting on the event suggested that the name given was very apt, not only because of the distinguished qualities of scholarship, love of truth, compassion and dedication to the welfare of the people, possessed by Vinoba but also because they were the very qualities which were present

in the chief organiser of the Session, Nijalingappa. Contemporary readers did not find this evaluation misdirected or exaggerated. As already indicated, the Second World War plunged the National Congress once again into an intense struggle, and the Congress refused to contribute to the war efforts on the ground that India was not prepared to be part of it excepting as an independent nation. At the same time Gandhiji did not want to embarrass the government in this critical time for it by waging a mass Satyagraha. Instead, he called for a more muted strategy of individual Satyagraha, and nominated Vinoba as a first individual to offer Satyagraha. The government arrested him for obstructing the war efforts and sentenced him to three months imprisonment. He was followed by Nehru and Patel, who were sentenced to the longer period of four years. But as the War reached a critical stage, the government released the Congress Working Committee members from jail in December 1941, with the idea of negotiating with the Congress to gain its co-operation. It sent Sir Stafford Cripps to be the negotiator. The Congress rejected his proposals, and only the Indian Communist Party accepted them as part of the party's internationalism. With the failure of the Cripps Mission, Gandhiji's position in the Congress acquired a new edge, and eventually it led to the famous Quit India resolution passed by the Congress in its special session held in Mumbai in the first week of August 1942. In response, without providing any room for negotiations, the government arrested Gandhiji, Nehru and other leaders, in early dawn. Nijalingappa attended this historic Session as a representative of Mysore Congress. While returning home, he was arrested at the border of the State itself.

None had expected the government to go in for such a drastic and swift action. The arrests enraged the people, and a violent phase of Indian Nationalist Movement became

inevitable. This spontaneous mass action shook the government at its foundation. The sudden arrest, however, put the families of the arrested leaders to untold suffering. Those families without ancestral property were the worst sufferers. Such families had to depend on the mercy of better-off relatives. Otherwise, the families faced near starvation, the children left neglected without proper education and even becoming victims of evil ways, and, above all, they became alienated from the head of the family. This, indeed, was more or less, the plight of Nijalingappa's family. Practically most cases from the taluka of Molakalmur, Challakere, Davanagere and Chitradurga, came to Nijalingappa. Morning or evening, clients from these places used to invade his house ! They used to literally camp on the premises. In the morning, when Neelamma cleaned up the mess they had created, especially the stubs of beedies or cigarettes, she protested to her son. Nijalingappa made light of the matter with a characteristically sympathetic understanding of their behaviour! It was these very clients who now came to the rescue of the family in this time of dire distress. Not wanting to burden his family with his worries, Nijalingappa never discussed political matters with the family. Thus the family was ill-prepared to face such sudden developments.

Also he had not saved anything out of his earnings, thanks to his habit of disbursing the money with generosity. Some three years prior to this family crisis, Nijalingappa had lost his Sanad to practise. In 1941, he came into contact with C.R.Basappa from Tumkur through the courtesy of his nephew, Gurunath. Basappa was working as a teacher in a high school in Tirthahalli, though he possessed a degree in law. When Nijalingappa offered to take him under his professional wing, Basappa accepted the offer without much hesitation. As usual, Nijalingappa asked Basappa to stay as his guest till he brought

to Chitradurga his own family. They two took to each other immediately, and from 1941 to 1946 Basappa took charge of Nijalingappa's office and carried on work in Nijalingappa's name. He also received excellent professional training from Nijalingappa. When the latter was in jail, Basappa sent a portion of his earnings for the expenses of the imprisoned senior's family. Neelamma and Murigemma managed the family affairs competently, looking after the upbringing of the children with attention. Gurunath, son of Rudrappa & Savakka, assisted the family in secular transactions, and a well-wisher, Heggere Tipperudrappa, with provisions. In short, the arrangement worked so well that it let Nijalingappa undergo his jail life without worry or care. Basappa who was a direct witness to what happened later recounted the hardships suffered by the family in a moving manner. According to him, the family had cut down its expenses drastically, and it was hard on the two ladies because they did not want the children to feel the impact of the decline in the family's fortunes. They were forced to reduce the expenses on fruits and vegetables as well as milk. They had also to take care to see that their misfortune was not visible to the neighbours. It was tough on the children who now missed their father very badly. This was at a time when the children needed most the father and his protective presence. It could also have an adverse effect on the mental development of the children. There was now no real joy in celebrating festivals and there was now no opportunity for them to travel. Naturally, their education suffered. According to his son, Rajasekhar, their mother was happy and proud that their father was participating in the freedom movement. Normally, she cooked only rotti and some dish of greens, but when political leaders came as guests she brought the rice to cook for them, and rice had become a luxury. In fact, the son recalled that they were brought up by the grand-mother. She took special

interest in their character and conduct. They were moulded by the old lady, and the children were especially impressed by the fact that she was a treasure-house of stories ! She would tell them folk tales or stories from the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana till they dozed off. Sometimes she sang them to sleep. She instilled in them a strong sense of discipline, and developed their moral sensitivity. She was proud of her son and loved her grand-children deeply. A woman with a rural upbringing and background, tended to be very orthodox, and observed customs faithfully. For instance, she would have been horrified to allow Harijans to enter their homes or touch them. Neelamma belonged to this category. During the early days of Nijalingappa's political career, his mother resented the familiarity with which his Harijan guests were treated without discrimination. But the son succeeded in changing her attitude by citing Basaveswara's vachanas or Gandhiji's words, and finally the old woman enthusiastically came forward to look after the Harijan guests herself ! It was as much a tribute to son's persuasive powers as to the mother's receptivity ! Neelamma had inherited from her father's expertise, in folk medicine. The grand-son recalled with pleasure how his grand-mother proclaimed the superiority of her medicine over the then just appearing penicillin.

As a rule, Nijalingappa did not beat his children, but only once when he did beat his son, he immediately felt sorry. He encouraged the children whenever they did anything worth-while. For instance, when his four-year old daughter Pratibha scribbled him a letter consisting of four lines, he would feel vēry happy. He was keen on imposing a strict regimen of health for the family. Though he never refused an invitation to eat outside, he never over-ate or ate what he regarded as unhealthy food. Though he appreciated good food, he did not make any special

demands. His son said that none in the family had undergone the ritual of wearing the Linga, a primary initiation ceremony for a Lingayat. The family did not indulge in ritualism and worship of the Linga. This humanistic and rationalist culture of the family was due to the influence of Nijalingappa's own thing and belief. Especially after his visit to the jails, he had given up altogether the practice of smearing his forehead with holy ash (Bhasma) and worshipping the Linga, though he did follow them while practising law. He never touched the feet of any human being with the exception of the religious Guru Mrityunjaya Swami. While he was always ready to help outsiders, he never bothered to show any sort of favouritism and often even minimally legitimate help to his own children. His interest in the family affairs after his plunge into nationalist politics became muted and even his daughters got married without any effort on his part ! Of his three sons, only the youngest, Kiran Shankar, is married and on his own initiative. His other two sons did not want to marry because they felt that their father had not left for them any resource. In short, the price for his jump into freedom movement was paid by his family. Only two of his sons managed to get adequate education, and the middle one was the worst hit. Nijalingappa did not make any property for his children because he believed that they should earn their own wealth, and he refused to use influence in his children's interest. In fact, the children did feel mildly bitter about their father's idealistic neglect of their interest, but this did not diminish their high regard for their father's moral stature. But the person who became the focal point of all the hardships of the family due to his departure for jail life was his wife Murigemma. She had never tasted poverty before marriage as she came from a prosperous family. But now she had to live a life of poverty in order to bring up her children. While his youngest son went to the college on a bicycle, his

daughters made do with just two sarees each ! Such was Murigemma's sense of self-respect and spirit of independence that she refused to accept offers of help from clients or well-wishers who were anxious to bail the family out. This characterised not only Murigemma but it became a general framework within which the family functioned.

The Quit India agitation saw thousands of freedom-fighters all over the country filling the British Indian jails. Most of them underwent appalling living conditions in the sub-human jails. Nijalingappa himself was quartered in Kolar Gold Fields jail for nine months and he had to live in the company of criminals. Subsequently he was transferred to Bangalore jail. Always eager to study and understand things, Nijalingappa tried to penetrate the socio-economic causes of criminal behaviour by observing fellow-prisoners. He went out of his way to understand the plight of these victims of society and helped them in whatever way he could. In particular, he drafted their petitions to the higher courts. Gandhiji blamed the government for the violence that followed in the wake of the arrest of leaders after the passing of the Quit India resolution. After the failure of his negotiations with the Viceroy, Gandhiji started his fast on 10th February, 1943, and on the sixth day his physical condition deteriorated to an alarming extent. Three Indian members of Viceroy's Council resigned in protest at the treatment meted out to the leader who was virtually on death-bed. Leaders from all over the world entreated the government to release the old man on grounds of health. Not only did the government ignore these appeals, it actually stepped up its brutal behaviour of repression. Gandhiji, however, completed his twentyone-day fast successfully, and the whole world heaved a sigh of relief. In the meanwhile, Gandhiji, after the death of Mahadev Desai and Kasturba, was attacked by a severe bout of malaria, which

weakened him. Indian leaders, cutting across party distinctions, urged the government to release the Mahatma, and the government released him. Gandhiji then shifted to Juhu in Bombay to recuperate. At the government level, Lord Linlithgow was replaced by Lord Wavell as the Viceroy of India. The Central Executive Council pressurised the new Viceroy to release all the Congress leaders, and immediately constitute a national government at the Centre.

In Mysore State itself, Mohammed Imam, a liberal-minded person, became the Minister for Law. He happened to be a friend of Nijalingappa, hailing as he did from Chitradurga. On health grounds, leaders like K.C. Reddy, K.Hanumanthaiah, Dasappa and others were released from the jail. Of course, they were let out on bail. Imam was keen on extending to Nijalingappa a similar benefit, and he sent a common friend as an emissary to Nijalingappa to urge him to write a letter to the government pleading for release on bail. But Nijalingappa was not prepared to be released on bail on a lame excuse. In 1944, though the Indian national leaders languished in the jails, the Mysore Government released all its political prisoners unconditionally. Nijalingappa was associated with the Mysore Congress right from its birth, and now he joined its executive committee, extending to it yeoman service. In his capacity as its General Secretary, he toured the State, establishing rapport with the masses, and spreading among them the ideology of the Congress and the teachings of Gandhiji. So deeply involved was he in Congress work that he turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of old clients to return to the practice of law ! He had now one single and all-consuming goal before him - political freedom of the country. No sooner did he come out of the jail than the position of the President of Mysore Congress was waiting for him. If today, such a position is the symbol of power, status,

influence and money, it was in those days a job that required sacrifice, poverty and material hardship. The Congress office was so poorly financed that it had no money often to pay the rent of its office building, hire employees to run the office and to defray travel expenses ! Nijalingappa used to get off the train in Bangalore station, and walk directly to the Congress office in Aralepete, carrying his baggage ! Then he would unroll his bedding and make it his official seat ! It also served as his mattress in the night. Whenever the office had enough money, which was seldom, it hired a cook to feed the office staff. At other times, the president got purchased rice packets from the nearby railway station and shared them with his office colleagues ! There were many nights when even this luxury was beyond him and he had to be content with a few bananas! The Congress funds which he collected were spent scrupulously to run the office and pay the staff. He washed his clothes himself and often he even lent a hand in cooking. Even, he helped in sweeping the office floor. None of these handicaps ruffled his equanimity, and the smile never left his face ! In fact, Nijalingappa's smile which worked like a backdrop to his conversations, became a famous trade-mark of the man ! Presidentship meant further alienation from domestic life, and the zeal to earn freedom for the land, drove into background the need to earn for the family. He was a tireless worker, and travelled frequently for party work. This helped him in endearing the masses both himself and the Congress movement. His genial personality and sheer goodness ensured that he had no political enemies.

No sooner did he relinquish presidentship of Mysore Congress than he had to take up an even more onerous responsibility, that of being the president of the Karnataka Provincial Congress Committee, the KPCC. His background

was such that he came to symbolise the unity of the fragmented Kannada region, especially the unity between its southern part, which comprised princely Mysore state, and its northern part, the Kannada areas then within the jurisdiction of the British Indian province of Bombay. Though he was born in the northern part, his education took place in Old Mysore State. He was elected to this office at crucial juncture in the history of the country, a period when the possibility of attaining independence was turning into a reality. It was the time when the British were virtually on their way out, with a national government ready to take over. Above all, it was the time when the very foundation of the new nation was being laid with the idea of a Constituent Assembly taking practical shape. During this crucial period of history, Nijalingappa who was the President of the KPCC was also elected to the Constituent Assembly. Holding of these positions enabled him to promote effectively the most important political movement in the history of modern Karnataka, the movement for the unification of the fragments of the linguistic region into a single administrative jurisdiction within the nation-state of India. This cause became the very breath of his life and consumed all his energy until the goal of a unified Karnataka State, though originally named Mysore State, was realised on 1st November, 1956. But that is too important a story to be made a mere part of the story which is the subject matter of this chapter. The next chapter will be devoted to it.

In this chapter, it should be noted that his commitment to the cause of linguistic state of Karnataka made him quite unpopular with the post-independence national leadership in the Congress but his political weight was too heavy to be ignored. Therefore, he was inducted into the working committee of the All India Congress. It seems very likely that this was the result

of the intervention of the then President of the Congress, Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, who was pro-linguistic provinces. Nijalingappa proved to be a political leader with a keen developmental vision. For instance, presiding over the first Malenadu (literally hilly region) Conference in Shimoga, which was inaugurated by the Central Minister, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, on 6th April 1954, he presented a well-thought out programme and plan for the development of this region which possessed abundant natural wealth.

The story of his participation in the nationalist movement has to be curtailed at this point for the simple reason that, in one sense, it was a brief story. This is in the sense that the regional political movement for freedom and the All India National Movement can be separated for the purpose of narrative convenience and analytical necessity. In the long run, and in a fundamental sense, they cannot be regarded as separate stories since the participants at the regional level like Nijalingappa did not regard them as two separate goals. They wanted both a free India and within it a unified Karnataka as its constituent part. In fact, the Ekikarana or unification ideology accepted by Nijalingappa maintained that India as a nation can only have a federal polity with its diverse linguistic regions as legitimate units of the federal arrangement.

# 4. THE BATTLE FOR UNIFIED KARNATAKA

There is no doubt that Nijalingappa is a quintessential regional politician whose identification with the linguistic region to which he belonged is total. While conceding this, one must immediately qualify this claim with the rider that both in his thought and conduct, being regionally oriented is not only not antithetical to being a nationalist but it is the only way one can be a genuine nationlist in a vast sub-continental country like India dominated by a diversity of linguistic-regional cultures with historically evolved identities. He was eminently qualified to move on to the national political stage with his background, but he chose to stay back to be a main historical actor at the regional level. Perhaps the nationlist leadership, distrustful of his intense and passionate regional commitment, was not anxious to have amidst it a person with such strong regional loyalties. In a country like India, where real political life exists at the regional level, no serious regional leader will exchange his genuine political power and status for the illusory power and glamour of national politics. Leaders of the calibre of a B.C.Roy or a Pratap Singh Kairon, would not consider it worth-while to make move to New Delhi ! In fact, in the recent interview this biographer had with him on 28th May, 1997 at his old modest house in Chitradurga, the veteran leader clearly regretted his shift to national stage as the President of the Congress and said that he was virtually hijacked by Kamaraj Nadar from Bangalore to Delhi ! Therefore, Nijalingappa's most significant contribution remains his contribution to the nation as a distinguished regional leader. At the regional level, it should

be noted that he played two roles - first as a Congress leader in the princely state of Mysore, and as the Congress leader of the entire Kannada region. In the former role, he not only contributed to the strengthening of the nationalist Congress movement in the State but he also played a key part in the struggle for responsible and democratic government in the State. His part in the struggle also involved the crucial achievement of keeping Mysore within the Indian national-state in 1948 as there was a very brief moment when the Maharaja tried to play the dangerous game of opting out of the new Indian nation ! His second role involved first in the successful struggle for the establishment of a unified Karnataka State as a part of the Indian Union and later, with its establishment as its first Chief Minister who laid the foundation for the all-round development of the new State. While it is a moot question which of the achievements should be regarded as more important, there is no doubt that the establishment of the new Mysore State, comprising all the Kannada-speaking areas barring the areas coming under border disputes with the neighbouring Maharashtra, Andhra and Tamil Nadu, is a more crucial event because it was a foundational event. In the interview already referred to earlier, Nijalingappa himself gave the impression that he regarded the foundation of the Karnataka State as his more significant work, though he was proud of his achievements as the Chief Minister.

Before focussing on Nijalingappa's historical role in the battle for a unified Karnataka province/state, a brief history of the movement is in order. It has a long history and it is neither necessary nor possible to offer a detailed account of that history here. What is proposed to be done is a broad picture of what happened in order to provide an overall grasp of the situation. It is a very complicated story and no summary can do full justice

to it. The epicenter of the demand for a separate Kannada administrative unit was Bombay Karnataka sub-region. Primarily it arose as a grievance that the interest of the Kannada people stood neglected in a multi-lingual Bombay province, virtually controlled by the Marathi-speaking people. There was a similar complaint against the other linguistic groups in the multi-lingual Madras presidency but the agitation was spearheaded by the Bombay Karnataka area. In the Hyderabad Kannada areas, too, a similar feeling of neglect existed but against the Muslim elite who ruled the State under the patronage of the autocratic ruler, the Nizam. In the princely State of Mysore, the Kannada people were not a minority and they had no motivation to generate such a movement. There, the Kannada identity grew not as a negative response but as a positive discovery of pride, in the historical tradition and culture of the Kannada people, with a specific focus on language and literature. Thus, the attitude of the Old Mysoreans towards the Ekikarana or Unification issue was always ambiguous, ranging from open support to underground resistance. It is important here to note that a few families of Veerashaivas and Vokkaligas enjoyed a privileged position under the Maharaja's regime. The further complication in the story was that there were groups opposed by the Congress-led freedom movement on the ground that it was controlled by upper castes, especially Brahmins, but these groups extended full support to the Ekikarana movement in Bombay Karnataka.

Though, in a loosely articulated manner, the demand existed from the end of the 19th century, it acquired later an organisational structure and a more elaborate ideological infrastructure. Perhaps to symbolise the complementarity of the freedom movement and the Ekikarana movement, the first Unification Conference was held 1924 in Belgaum at the same venue in which the 40 th session of the Indian National Congress

was held. Nijalingappa who attended the Congress must have had some contact with it, though no clear evidence on this is available. Some historians and scholars have suggested that the Ekikarana goal was part of the search for identity among the Kannada people that arose as a result of the intellectual-cultural renaissance initiated under the impact of the modern West. While this certainly could be a background cause, the political impulse for Ekikarana was more likely the result of the sense of being neglected as a minority.

The movement began as an affair of the intellectuals and ideologues, dominated as it was by poets and other literary people including journalists. It appears that it was politicised by the politicians subsequently as supportive of the overall freedom movement since it presupposed that the alienation from, and neglect of, the mother-tongue was a consequence of imperialism and the political slavery involved. Thus, the demand for Ekikarana drew its sustenance not only from the grievance against other dominant linguistic groups but it also gained significance as an anti-imperialist movement. In fact, the two were seen as interdependent causes. Moreover, it was not confined to the Kannada people only. It was an all India movement, being a natural consequence of India's linguistic diversity. The movement demanded that the Kannada-speaking region which was highly fragmented into as many as twenty administrative political jurisdictions, some located in British India and other in princely India, should be united. Even prior to the first Ekikarana Conference in Belgaum in 1924, the Karnataka State Political Conference held in Dharwad in 1920 under the presidentship of V.P. Madhavrao, passed a resolution demanding a unified Karnataka. Leaders like Kadapa Raghavendra Rao worked hard to mobilise support for it at the Nagpur session of the Congress. Around 800 delegates from

Karnataka attended the session and succeeded in getting a separate provincial Congress Committee for Karnataka in 1920. The sense of Karnataka's identity was further strengthened after this event by the emergence of all-Karnataka conferences on Khadi, Ayurveda, History, Industry and Commerce, Journalism and so on which came to be held annually. Within North Karnataka or Bombay Karnataka, Dharwad was the pivotal hub of the movement. Leaders like Mudaveedu, Kadapa, Honnapurmath, supported by the literary figures associated with the famous GELEYARA GUMPU (literally Friend's Group) which revolved round the magnetic personality of poet Bendre, fed and sustained the movement. The organisational instrument of the movement was originally Ekikarana Sabha which was subsequently renamed as Karnataka Ekikarana Sangha. It functioned in tandem with the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee. Until 1947, it held eleven annual conferences at different places in Karnataka, and Dharwad had the distinction of holding it four times - in 1928, 1933, 1938 and 1944. It succeeded in pressurising the Congress in the pre-1947 period to accept the demand. For instance, the Congress election manifesto in 1937 accepted the demand.

The movement soon acquired an all-Karnataka character. The Karnataka Ekikarana Sangha was established in Bangalore in 1938 with Benagal Rama Rao as its President and B. Shivamurthy Sastry as its Secretary. The Ekikarana Sangha stepped up its activities of awakening the regional consciousness especially in border areas like Madaksira, Hosur, Kollegal, Adoni and so on. By 1946, it became clear that the British would leave India sooner or later and this was confirmed by the fact that a Constituent Assembly started working in Delhi in December, 1946. This development made the issue of Ekikarana more urgent and immediately relevant. That was why

the Unification Conference held at Bombay in 1946 and the subsequently held all-Karnataka Convention in Davanagere under the presidentship of M.P. Patil, the then Minister for Revenue in the Bombay Government, made a strong plea for the formation of a unified Karnataka province/state. In particular, they urged the Constituent Assembly to take steps immediately to bring into existence a unified Karnataka. Later in April 1947, the State Legislatures of both Bombay and Madras passed resolutions favouring a unified Karnataka.

Nijalingappa came into the situation directly in 1946 as the President of the KPCC because, as suggested earlier, the KPCC and the Ekikarana Sangha worked in close co-operation to advance the cause of the linguistic province of Karnataka. From then on, Nijalingappa plunged whole-heartedly into the struggle for the formation of a unified linguistic state comprising all the Kannada-speaking areas. He inaugurated the Bombay Conference of the Karnataka Ekikarana Sangha in 1946, and in his inaugural address Sardar Patel supported fully the demand for a separate and unified Karnataka. Both in this conference and all-Karnataka convention held later on 31st August, 1946 in Davanagere, Nijalingappa took an active role, identifying himself intensely and passionately with Ekikarana cause. This convention set up a committee, consisting of Nijalingappa, M.P. Patil, and K.B. Jinaraja Hegde, to intensify the battle for a separate Karnataka. A short while later, the Mysore Congress Committee under the presidentship of K.C.Reddy also passed a resolution at its meeting in Bangalore welcoming the formation of a unified Karnataka. In December, 1947, the annual Kannada Sahitya Sammelana (Kannada Literary Conference) at Kasargod on the border of Kerala, was combined with the Ekikarana Conference. At this momentous session, Nijalingappa declared most unequivocally and bluntly that the Kannadigas would

severely oppose any constitutional scheme that did not grant a separate unified Karnataka province.

In the meanwhile, a responsible government was installed in Old Mysore on 24th October, 1947, with the Maharaja as the head of the government. At the crucial session of the Mysore Congress held at Birur on 6th November, 1948, Chief Minister K.C. Reddy proclaimed openly that Old Mysore would not come in the way of the formation of a unified Karnataka province. The Session also passed a resolution which stated that the Indian National Congress was committed to the establishment of linguistic provinces, that the Mysore State Congress had always accepted it, and that the fragmented region of Karnataka could not progress unless and until it was unified into a single jurisdiction. The resolution argued that the people of Karnataka shared a common material interests. Therefore, it pleaded for the formation of a unified Karnataka province with the Maharaja as its constitutional head. The resolution was passed unanimously. Attempts to pressurise the Constituent Assembly to incorporate in the Indian Constitution the linguistic division of the country were made at the time the Assembly was constituted in 1946. On 8th December 1946, under the presidentship of Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, advocates of linguistic provinces met in Delhi for this purpose. The meeting reminded the Congress that its commitment to linguistic provinces was as old as 1920 and that its manifesto in 1945 elections included the promise to re-draw the political-administrative map of India on linguistic lines. Therefore, it urged the Constituent Assembly to provide for linguistic provinces. A meeting of the Presidents of Provincial Congress Committees held in Delhi under the presidentship of Babu Rajendra Prasad, who was also the president of the Constituent Assembly, also resolved on 24 February 1948 in favour of linguistic provinces. In 1948, the

Mysore State Constitution Committee also resigned to make provisions in the State's Constitution for expanding Mysore State to include other Kannada-speaking areas with their consent. Many intellectuals and literary figures from across the Kannada region supported Ekikarana. The only prominent exception was D.V. Gundappa (DVG) who wanted two Karnatakas - one comprising Old Mysore State and the other comprising the rest of the Kannada areas. The Central leadership, especially Nehru, seems to have developed cold feet over the issue. However, in the Parliament he announced that it was easier to form Andhra than Karnataka. In Karnataka, there was naturally resentment and some even felt that Nehru was trying to exploit the disunity within the ranks of Karnataka leaders over the issue. Immediately in reaction to Nehru's statement, a delegation of members of the Constituent Assembly from Karnataka and legislators from the region went to Delhi on 25 January 1948 and submitted a memorandum to the Congress Working Committee. Nijalingappa who was at this time the President of the KPCC led this delegation, which included K.R.Karant, M.P.Patil and R.R.Diwakar. The delegation warned Central leadership that if discrimination was made between Andhra and Karnataka in favour of the former over the issue, all legislators from various Legislatures and hailing from Karnataka would be forced to tender their resignations. They also met Gandhiji and submitted a copy of this memorandum.

Gandhiji's assassination brought a temporary lull in the activities associated with the linguistic states issue. But soon, the people of Kerala, Andhra, Karnataka and Maharashtra articulated the demand with such vehemence that Central Congress leadership had to do something. Whenever a Government does not want to take a decision on an issue, the

best strategy for it is to appoint a Commission or a Committee which will delay matters for a while. The National Congress Government did precisely this by appointing the Dhar Committee under the chairmanship of S.K.Dhar to go into the matter. This Committee's appointment was announced on 17th June 1948. Perhaps the Committee was performing the task for which it had been set up when it recommended that, in view of the complexities and cross-currents involved, it was best to postpone the whole issue ! On the question of Karnataka, its significant findings were that Kannada-speaking areas in Tamil and Telugu regions should be merged with Karnataka and that the main obstacle to an easy formation of Karnataka was the opposition to it in princely Mysore. As expected, there was wide-spread and intense protest in Karnataka, led by the KPCC. In this massive protest, Nijalingappa became a focal figure, organising the people and mobilising them for the cause of Ekikarana. He bombarded the national leadership both in the Parliament and outside it with facts and figures to justify Ekikarana claim. His identification with the cause became so total that he literally thought, dreamed and breathed all the time this all-consuming idea! The 55th annual session of the Indian National Congress in December 1948 held in Jaipur was forced to take serious note of the problem and it appointed a three-man committee consisting of Pattabhi Sitaramaiah, Nehru and Patel to report on the issue. This was yet another Committee and with the same end-result. Its report published on 1 April 1949 sang the old tune of advocating caution in the matter, as it might undermine national unity and the country's territorial integrity, even affecting adversely the country's economic development. It also held that the demand for Andhra should be accorded primacy, presumably because an Andhra man was one of its members. The report enraged the general public in Karnataka, and provoked an intensely emotional response. The KPCC which met in Hubli on 8th May 1949 under

Nijalingappa's presidentship to consider the report expressed total disillusion with its recommendations. The efforts of Nijalingappa and other leaders to get the demand for Karnataka and Andhra recognised and conceded in the Constitution ended thus in failure. The protest and frustration climaxed in the resolution passed by the KPCC in its meeting in Hubli on 3rd December, 1949 asking the legislators from Karnataka both in the Parliament and the State Legislatures to resign. It did not flinch from stating in the resolution that the Kannada people had lost their faith in the Congress, that because of the absence of a unified province they were facing daily hardships, and that the legitimate interests of Kannadigas were systematically trampled upon, preventing them from playing their role in national development and progress. The resignation was the only option for these legislators as they had failed to discharge their duties. A delegation led by Nijalingappa called on Vallabhai Patel in Bombay on 4th January, 1950 to draw his attention to this historic resolution. Later the delegation visited Delhi to submit the resolution personally to the Congress Working Committee. The Congress President, Rajendra Prasad, assured them that no discrimination would be made against Karnataka over the issue. In the meanwhile, the Andhra issue itself got postponed because of opposition to the formation of Andhra by the people of Rayalaseem districts of Bellary, Karnool, Cudapa and Anantapur.

There is no doubt that there existed genuine opposition in princely Mysore to Ekikarana, not so much at the level of leadership as among the local Lingayat community, the majority community in the State. Ekikarana was seen as a loss of advantages and benefits, enjoyed under Maharaja's regime. At the same time, and as explained to this biographer by Nijalingappa during the interview already referred to, this

opposition was overshadowed by a general acceptance of the idea. It was certainly Nijalingappa's benign personality, his unimpeachable integrity and his reasoning capability which were able to win over many leaders from Old Mysore to Ekikarana. But some of the most prominent leaders - H.C. Dasappa, K.C. Reddy, K.T. Bhashyam, A.G. Bandi Gowda and others - had never opposed Ekikarana. The problem lay really in the dilly-dallying by the national leadership in the North and the chronic disunity among the Kannadigas themselves should be blamed for the delay in tackling the problem. A prominent Old Mysore leader, K. Hanumanthaiah, blamed the lack of effective leadership and unity among the people of Karnataka for the delay. He stated bluntly that regional leaders from the South had lent themselves to easy co-optation by the national leadership by abandoning the regional cause !

The battle for Ekikarana was, however, kept alive by various organizations. On 12th July 1951, for instance, the Executive Committee of Karnataka Yuva Parishat (Karnataka Youth Conference) under the Presidentship of K.M. Rudrappa, passed a resolution welcoming the stand of the conference on Ekikarana and itself fully supported Ekikarana. Nijalingappa called on the then Congress President, Purushottamdas Tandon, and held a long discussion with him on the issue of re-organising the provinces on linguistic lines. He attended the meeting of the Congress Working Committee and told it in blunt language that the people had lost faith in the Congress because it had failed to fulfil its own promise to form linguistic provinces, a promise which it had given to the people long time ago. He warned it that the consequent dis-satisfaction among the people might turn them against the Congress in elections. During the same time, in a private discussion with Nehru, Nijalingappa explained that the delay in establishing a Kannada province had

created widespread resentment in Karnataka and this was being politically exploited by reactionary and anti-Congress forces in the region. Thanks to these efforts, in its election manifesto in 1951, the Congress agreed to include the formation of linguistic provinces. This was welcomed by a meeting of Provincial Congress Committee Presidents held under the presidentship of Shankar Rao Dev on 17th July 1951. To take steps to promote the demand and to further mobilise people, institutions in its direction, this meeting appointed a six-man Committee under Nijalingappa's chairmanship.

In the meanwhile, the reactionary forces represented by the native rulers attempted to form an independent union of their own consisting of rulers from the South. The initiative in the matter was taken by the Maharaja of Sangli at a meeting organised for the purpose. The seventeen native states in Karnataka expressed their desire to join the union which was to be a political entity with a constitution of its own. In fact, K.M. Munshi had prepared a constitution for this proposed union ! While Congress leaders like Pattabhi Sitaramaiah and, R.R. Diwakar and Shankar Rao Dev, attended a meeting in the Imperial Hotel in Delhi, convened by the Maharaja of Sangli for the purpose, Nijalingappa, always a democrat and a progressive leader, went round doing propaganda against the union. Always a man of principle who had the courage to proclaim it, he went to the President of the Congress then, Acharya Kriplani, who was believed to have approved the idea of such a union, and challenged him asking him whether he wanted India divided into two jurisdictions ! Kriplani simply directed him to Nehru, and characteristically Nehru directed him to Sardar Patel ! Sardar Patel immediately saw the implications of the move and advised Nijalingappa to take the initiative in starting Satyagraha in all the States, assuring him that he, the

Sardar, would do the rest. He patted Nijalingappa on the back for what he was doing. He even approached Munshi to express his protest. But Munshi's response was to tell him that he had looked upon the problem as a technical one and with the eyes of a constitutional lawyer. Munshi explained that he had been paid thirty thousand rupees for the job, but he would work with Nijalingappa as a Congress Soldier if he started Satyagraha in the State! This is not a widely known fact, and Nijalingappa's role in this affair was critical to the issue of linguistic provinces because the proposed union would have posed a problem to the formation of linguistic provinces. Fortunately for Indian democracy and federalism, Nijalingappa's agitation killed the union before it could be born !

An unexpected development led to an earlier formation of the Andhra State, announced by the Government in the Lok Sabha on 19 December 1952. This was to the fast unto death started by Potti Sriramulu to force the Government to establish the Andhra State. After 58 days, Sriramulu died becoming a martyr to the cause of Andhra. In its wake, the whole of the Telugu area rose in what amounted to a virtual revolt, marked by unprecedented violence and destruction of property. In spite of his bravado that he would not yield to violence, Nehru had to yield to it in the end. But bound up with the issue of determining the territory of Andhra was the issue of settling the borders with the neighbouring Karnataka region. The most important question to be resolved was whether Bellary district should be included in the forth-coming Andhra State. The Wanchoo One-man Committee to go into the matter recommended that since the district had a majority of population speaking Kannada, only its seven taluks should be included in Andhra until Karnataka was formed. In other words, the issue was kept open to be re-opened at the time of forming Karnataka.

On 12th January 1953, Nijalingappa, an uncompromising champion of the cause of Karnataka, argued for more than an hour passionately to explain and defend the case of Karnataka on the issue. The indecisiveness of the Central Government and the National Congress leadership, especially that of Nehru, disturbed Nijalingappa's mind can be understood from a passage in his diary, recorded on 15th January 1953. In it, he asserts that the leaders as a class were unable to grasp the realities of the country, presumably because their mental ability had declined due to old age! He found Nehru's position that the feudal state of Nizam's Hyderabad should not be linguistically split, appealed to none excepting Maulana Azad. He accused Nehru of exhaustion and loss of elan, and considered him a puppet in the hands of self-serving sycophants! He regretted Nehru's weakness for flattery, and his inability to judge people correctly. Nijalingappa has sometimes been regarded as a weak person, but the truth is that his innate courtesy and gentlemanly frame of mind have been mistaken for weakness. As the Hyderabad issue shows, he took a firm stand against the single most powerful person in the land, Nehru the Prime Minister of India! In fact, he noted with bitterness that Dasappa toed the Nehru line without resistance and that Mallya behaved even worse by reducing the Ekikarana demand to the level of a demand confined to two districts of Bombay Karnataka ! In fact, it appears in retrospect that Nijalingappa had to carry a lone battle for Karnataka against a recalcitrant national leadership. However, it did give Nijalingappa some consolation that Hanumanthaiah supported the formation of a unified Karnataka by merging the other Kannada areas with Old Mysore State.

The struggle to retain Bellary district in Karnataka shows with what single-minded devotion and dedication Nijalingappa

upheld the interest of the Karnataka. In a second round of discussion with Justice Wanchoo on 28 January 1953, supported by colleagues like K.S.Hegde, he pleaded strongly for non-inclusion of Bellary district in the imminent Andhra State. On 11 March 1953, Nijalingappa addressed a letter to Nehru, urging that Bellary district and Madaksira taluk should be merged with Mysore State. When Andhra was officially announced, its territory was defined to include three taluks of Bellary district - Adoni, Alur and Rayadurga- and more importantly Bellary town itself. Both the fact that Andhra was born without Karnataka and that Bellary town was included in Andhra provoked fierce reaction among the Kannadigas. One Narayan Pai from Mundgod taluka in Uttara Kannada district (then known as North Kanara) undertook a fast in protest. The people of Bellary organised a hartal, and normal life in the town became disrupted. The most famous incident was the fast unto death undertaken in the cause of Karnataka by Shankara Gowda of Adaragunchi village near Hubli. The situation became so grave that the KPCC met in Hubli under Nijalingappa's Presidentship on 19 April 1953 to take stock of the situation. To protest against the Prime Minister's policy and action, people from different parts of Karnataka converged on Hubli to demonstrate their anger. The tumultuous crowd with their slogans and movement made a mockery of law and order. The situation became so grave that the police had to resort to firing to control the crowd. The KPCC passed a resolution demanding the formation of Karnataka before the end of 1954 and gave notice to the Centre that if this demand of the PCC was not conceded, Congress legislators in the Parliament and other state legislatures would resign. The resolution appealed to Shankara Gowda to suspend his fast temporarily. When Nijalingappa visited Bellary on 2nd May 1953, he found the whole town ablaze with anger and frustration, and he was given a rousing

reception. He was taken round the town in a spectacular procession, which the Telugu elements tried to, but could not, disrupt. The agitation over the Bellary issue at last forced the Centre to re-open it by appointing another one-man commission consisting of Justice L.S.Mishra to go into the question. On 5th May, 1953, Nijalingappa met Justice Mishra and submitted a memorandum after a thorough oral discussion of the problem. At last Nijalingappa succeeded in convincing Justice Mishra through his objective and persuasive reasoning that Bellary town should be merged with Old Mysore State. The Muslim community also supported this demand unanimously. The Centre accepted the recommendation of Justice Mishra to this effect.

A major aspect of the Ekikarana issue was the settling of the borders of the State in the light of disputes over it with other states. Thus, the movement had to be seriously organised in the border areas. The Nilagiri area in Old Madras Province was part of the Kannadiga claim that it should be merged with Karnataka. To press the claim, the Karnataka Sangha of Nilagiri held a meeting on 25th May 1953 under Nijalingappa's presidentship to articulate the demand that the Badagas of the area should be in Karnataka. It was inaugurated by the then Chief Minister of Old Mysore, K. Hanumanthaiah, and on this occasion the Badagas themselves submitted a memorandum that they wanted to be part of Karnataka. Nijalingappa welcomed the Bill to form Andhra when it came up for discussion in a meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party in Delhi on 13th August 1953, but did not hesitate to add that his joy would have doubled if a bill for the formation of Karnataka had been presented simultaneously. He also pleaded forcefully with facts and figures that Adoni, Alur and Rayadurg as well as Hosur and the Nilagiris should be in Karnataka.

Finding it impossible to postpone or avoid the issue, Nehru bowed to popular demand and announced that the Government would appoint a Commission to make a comprehensive examination of the problem of re-organising the States on the linguistic basis and make recommendations to the Government. He also announced that the Commission would be asked to submit an interim report in mid-1955. This announcement was made in the Lok Sabha on 22nd December 1953. The States Re-organisation Commission (SRC), as it was called, was headed by Syed Fazl Ali who was then the Governor of Orissa, with its other two members being Pandit H.N.Kunzru and Sardar K.M.Panikkar. There was universal welcome to the announcement. At a meeting of Congress legislators held in Hubli on 4th February 1954, Hanumanthaiah, inaugurating it, welcomed the setting up of the SRC, and gave assurance that Old Mysore would have absolutely no opposition to it. Yet some leaders from Old Mysore did go round propagating the idea of two Karnatakas - one comprising Old Mysore and Coorg, and the other comprising the rest of the Kannada areas, that is, Bombay Karnataka, Madras Karnataka and Hyderabad Karnataka. Thus a clear rift developed within the ranks of the Mysore Congress over the issue of Ekikarana. The Mysore Congress Committee took a decision, in consequence, not to submit any memorandum to the SRC. Barring the Mysore Congress, all important organisations and institutions in the Karnataka region - Karnataka Province Formation Conference, Akhanda Karnataka Rajya Nirmana Parishat, Karnataka Yuvaka Sangha, Journalists Association, Karnataka Ekikarana Sangha, Karnataka Vanik Sangha, and other non-Congress political parties made representations to the Commission and submitted memoranda supporting Ekikarana. This impressive and massive display of support was mobilised due to Nijalingappa's untiring and dedicated work.

The State Government of Mysore, however, appointed the Seshadri Committee to examine the issue of Ekikarana and submit a report in the context of the SRC. This Committee made a thorough and systematic collection of data relating to the resources and socio-economic developmental levels obtaining in the Kannada-speaking areas other than Old Mysore State, and highlighted the problems the new expanded Mysore State had to face if Ekikarana was accepted. It also suggested ways and means of overcoming these problems. This was essentially a fact-finding committee and it merely pointed out the problems likely to arise if Ekikarana was implemented. Nijalingappa in the meanwhile appeared before the Commission on 7th May 1954 to make a powerful case for a unified Karnataka State. The next crucial development in the Ekikarana story was a mammoth meeting of representatives from all over Karnataka and representing every party and interest held in Davanagere for two days on 28th and 29th May 1954 to hammer out a commonly acceptable memorandum to the SRC in support of Ekikarana. It authorised Nijalingappa to present the memorandum to the SRC and to argue the case of Karnataka with the Commission. This meant that Nijalingappa was universally acknowledged as the unquestioning symbol of the cause of Ekikarana. Nijalingappa's political style was essentially that of tackling problems with cool objectivity, backed up by friendly and conciliatory attitude. He resorted to more aggressive style only when the situation warranted it. It was in this style, an essential aspect of his personality, that Nijalingappa could successfully handle the issue of border disputes and, above all, present the case of Karnataka before the Commission. But in tackling the Central Congress leadership, he found it often necessary to abandon this style and adopt a more aggressive one ! For instance, he wrote a letter to Nehru on 29th January 1956, warning that the question of Bellary was too serious a matter to be handled in a cavalier manner.

The air was full of rumours about what the SRC would finally do during the period it deliberated. One rumour which shocked Nijalingappa was the rumour that a composite state comprising the whole of South India was contemplated by the Commission. He got into action immediately by meeting Southern leaders like Kamaraj Nadar to discuss the matter. The result was that Nijalingappa found that none of them favoured the idea. However, he felt convinced that the rumour was without foundation, and he referred to the issue in his inaugural address to the conference of Kannadigas from the border areas, which was held in Bangalore in Jayadeva Hostel on 2nd January 1956. It was a huge gathering of some four hundred delegates, and some of them openly condemned the idea of a composite State of South India. Suspecting that it was yet another ruse of Nehru to stall Ekikarana, the delegates attacked him without mincing words. Coincidentally, Nehru was personally present in Bangalore at the time for some reason, and he invited the Chief Ministers of Mysore, Madras and Andhra to consider the proposal to form such a composite State. This confirmed that Nehru was behind the mischievous idea ! It seems that the news had reached Nehru that Nijalingappa had determined to fight against the project of the composite State till the last drop of his blood. This did not bother Nijalingappa because he knew that regular attempts were made by some leaders from Dakshina Kannada and Dharwad districts to poison Nehru's mind against him. They did not like him because they were jealous of his standing with the masses, and were even scared of him. Their belief was that their own political positions would remain safe as long as Nehru disapproved of their arch enemy, Nijalingappa ! But they also knew that Nijalingappa did not care for office and was not affected by their politicking. The truth was that Nehru had no idea of what Nijalingappa thought about the composite South Indian State,

and in fact Nijalingappa discussed with him the Bellary issue and Nehru made no reference to the issue of the composite State at all ! Nijalingappa was not given to flattery and false display of loyalty. When Nehru flew back to Delhi the next morning, he was not among the time-servers who went to the airport to bid farewell to Nehru. Arguably, Nehru who enjoyed flattery might have held this against Nijalingappa.

The SRC submitted its report to Government on 30th September, 1955 and it formed the agenda for the Amritsar session of the Congress on 10th February 1956. The debate was more characterised by narrow partisan interests than by a broad-based concern for the overall national interest. Most leaders did not have the courage to speak their minds. No meaningful debate could emerge because of this, and the deliberations tended to become a one-man show. In his diary entry for 10th February 1956, Nijalingappa regretted that people did not express their view with courage and tended to toe the official line obsequiously. He thought this was not good for the country. When urged by Jagjivan Ram to express his approval of the official resolution on the report, Nijalingappa preferred to remain silent because he knew the outcome. As he noted, when N.V.Gadgil opposed the resolution, the top brass comprising Nehru, Pant and others demonstrated their disapproval. The main issue was the possibility of establishing bilingual States, and the leadership tried hard to sell the idea. Regional political rivalries played some role in the debate. For instance, Subramaniam from Madras spoke in favour of a composite State of South India in order to embarrass Kamaraj Nadar who was known to be its strong opponent ! Nijalingappa knew that the idea of bilingual states was outside the realm of the practical. He was appalled by the amount of personality cult that characterised general behaviour. The issue of bilingual

states was later discussed by the Mysore Pradesh Congress Committee at its meeting in Bangalore on 19th February 1956. The idea came in handy for those who opposed Ekikarana, and they included H.K. Veeranna Gowda, H.C. Dasappa and M.V. Krishnappa among others. The meeting resolved to leave the final decision on the matter to the Executive Committee. Nijalingappa was picked up as the appropriate leader from the South by Panikkar, a member of the SRC, to express his disapproval of the bilingual states, and the idea of a single composite state of South India. Further, Panikkar argued with him against the formation of large States on the ground that they might prove difficult for handling by the Centre. Nijalingappa, however, continued to be haunted by the scepter of bilingual and multi-lingual states. The case of Karnataka was complicated by undercurrents of caste conflict, especially between the two dominant communities of Lingayats and Vokkaligas. By and large, the opposition came from the Vokkaligas because they smelt a plot to establish Lingayat dominance in the demand for Ekikarana. As Nijalingappa has been explaining, while he was sure that the opposition was marginal and negligible, he had moments of doubt about his own complacency and optimism. In the entry for 3rd March 1956, he recorded an interesting incident. It seems when he was travelling from Kadur to Mysore by train on 3rd March 1956, Shivaram Karant happened to be a fellow-traveller. Naturally, their conversation turned towards the topic of linguistic states. Karant told Nijalingappa with visible anguish that an influential Vokkaliga leader had argued with him against Ekikarana and advocated a unified state of South India, and the ground advanced was that this would cut the Veerashaivas to size. Karant was unhappy at such narrow communal attitudes. A few days later, when Nijalingappa met the senior Vokkaliga leader in Bangalore, the latter assured him of his support for

Ekikarana. He was Sahukar Chennaiah, and Nijalingappa feared that Chennaiah might reverse his stand under pressure from National leadership in Delhi.

On 23rd April 1956, the Union Home Minister, Pant, tabled the SRC report in the Lok Sabha, and suggested that the report should be referred to a Select Committee of the House. It was not surprising that the Minister included Nijalingappa in the Committee. But perhaps no less surprising was the fact that when the Speaker read the official list of members of the Committee, Nijalingappa's name did not figure in it. Nijalingappa suspected that this omission was the work of a Lok Sabha member from Dakshina Kannada district who had always been jealous of Nijalingappa's popularity and political status. But then, another member of the House, C.R.Basappa objected to the list and the Home Minister then included Nijalingappa's name and the Speaker announced it accordingly. In the Select Committee, Nijalingappa advocated the inclusion of Bellary in Karnataka and of Bombay in Maharashtra. Thanks to the efforts of countless known and unknown lovers of Karnataka and the committed leadership of political figures among whom Nijalingappa must be reckoned central, and, of course, the overall national opinion in favour of linguistic states, Ekikarana became inevitable. Those who were against it and had worked against it had now no option but to accept the coming into existence of a unified Karnataka State. Yet the former-opponents carried on rear-guard action to win a symbolic and marginal victory by having the new State named Mysore, instead of Karnataka, thus causing a minor frustration for the champions of Karnataka Ekikarana like Alur Venkat Rao. Among those who engineered this minor victory for the anti-merger camp, was Devaraj Urs. When the Select Committee rejected the idea of bilingual states, the then Congress President,

U.N. Dhebar, expressed his disappointment to Nijalingappa. In the entry in his diary for 13th May 1956, Nijalingappa recorded that top leaders like Dhebar were unable to grasp the ground realities in the country, and were often misled by the coteries around them. They had lost contact with the people. Nijalingappa felt that Dhebar, a very simple and good man, was perhaps a victim of such circumstances !

At the time the Select Committee sat to deliberate over the report, Delhi was busy with hectic political activity. People all over India flocked to the capital hoping to influence the Committee to concede their demands. For instance, Shri Rama Reddy, K.R. Karant, Umesh Rao and others pressurised Nijalingappa to get Madaksira and Kasargod included in Karnataka. Though Nijalingappa mooted the idea in the meeting of the Select Committee, he refrained from taking a rigid position on the issue - an illustration of his overall approach in which major issues are non-negotiable while minor ones are negotiable ! Yet it did bother him whether his relegation of the issue to a minor negotiable status was justified. But then the more important compulsion to downgrade the demand was the fear that Maharashtrians might demand the inclusion of Karwar and Belgaum in Maharashtra as a bargain-counter! While Pant proclaimed that Karnataka was the greatest gainer as a result of the deliberations, Nijalingappa contested the claim, asserting that great injustice had been done to Kannadigas. But as a matter of tactics, he did not press the matter for fear that either Karnataka might lose whatever it had so far gained or a controversy at that stage might give the Central leadership a golden opportunity to postpone the whole issue! He put his heart and soul into the work of the Committee as it was crucial to Karnataka. He used to hold constant discussion with the representatives from Kerala and Maharashtra, and he took

utmost care to guard the interest of the people of Karnataka. When the recommendations of the Select Committee came up for discussion in the Lok Sabha, the issue that provoked most animated debate was the future of Bombay City. On that issue, Finance Minister, C.D.Deshmukh, resigned from the Government. Some members suggested that it was desirable to continue Maharashtra and Gujarat in a single bilingual state for some time. The issue that concerned Karnataka most was, of course, the border problem. To solve the border disputes amicably, representatives from Karnataka, Andhra, Maharashtra and Kerala met under the presidentship of Nijalingappa, thus indicating the measure in which he was able to command the respect and trust of even those who differed from him. Unfortunately, the issues proved to be intractable due to the passionate commitments involved, and the meeting left the problem where it was. The only tangible and in the circumstances a positive outcome was the appointment of a committee to offer guidelines on the principles to be followed in sorting out the disputes and, if possible, offer practicable solutions to the problem. It was just when the dream of Ekikarana was about to become a reality that the scare of bilingual states suddenly reappeared. It was B.Shiva Rao and C.P. Mathen who revived the issue but it was an open secret that Dasappa was extending support to them! From the entry in his diary for 8th August 1956, it seems that Nijalingappa who was totally opposed to the idea telephoned Dasappa about it. The SR bill reached the stage of Third Reading in the Parliament on 9th August 1956, and Nijalingappa looked upon that day as the happiest day of his life as the very goal of his life was being realised on that day. The following day, on 10 August 1956, as soon as the Third Reading was over, many members of the Lok Sabha rushed to Nijalingappa to

shake hands with him and even to embrace him with joy and gratitude. It was a gesture well deserved and meant to commemorate Nijalingappa's dominant role in the whole chapter on States Re-organisation in the history of modern India.

It is time now to leave the history of the Ekikarana movement and what Nijalingappa actually did for it, and attempt to interpret the history to assess Nijalingappa's role in it. While none can, and, in fact, has, questioned the crucial contribution made by him to the achievement of the goal of Ekikarana, there have been oblique criticisms, often inspired by questionable motives, about his role and contribution. The one criticism generally made in this connection and with apparent justification is that the Ekikarana movement was a communal one in a significant sense, and that this nature of the movement was sought to be concealed. To put it in an unambiguous language, the criticism is that it was a movement designed to establish Lingayat dominance in Karnataka, and therefore Nijalingappa must be regarded also communal in so far as he played a central role in its realisation. At one level, a very superficial level, this critique appears to be valid but very little reflection is needed to expose its weaknesses. Even if one grants that the movement was propelled by Lingayat aspirations for political dominance, it does not follow logically that Nijalingappa himself as a person was so motivated. Indeed, nothing can be far from the truth than the communal accusation against Nijalingappa. His entire life-record is a standing evidence to the contrary. As we saw earlier in this narrative, Nijalingappa was not a Lingayat in the narrow sense. It is one thing to say that he is a follower of Lingayat religious ideals, and it is quite another thing to say that he wanted the interest of one community to be promoted at the cost of common interest of the Kannada people cutting across caste and communal

divisions. Nijalingappa was genuinely committed to the great moral ideals of humanism enshrined in the teachings of great Basaveswara centuries ago, and he also is committed to the great moral principles upheld by Gandhiji. Moreover, he always drew a crucial distinction between the spirit and the letter of Lingaytism, between the inner content and outer shell of Lingaytism, and that is why he attached very little importance to rituals and outward display of his faith. It would be the height of travesty to even hint that such a person can be communal. None who has had any sort of contact with him has failed to see his essential humanism. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that his commitment to both the spirit of Lingayatism and Gandhism is the result of his more fundamental commitment to the humanistic values of truth, rationality and justice.

The question whether Ekikarana movement was a movement engineered by Lingayats to capture political power is a misconceived question. In the first place, there is no evidence that the Lingayats had actually and consciously single-handedly organised or controlled the movement. Even if one were to argue that the formation of a unified Karnataka would make them a major community in the new State and thus dominate it, this could hardly and logically be taken as evidence that the movement per se was Lingayat movement. If it is argued that the Lingayats took a keener interest than others, this would be flying against the facts. The movement was, in fact, pioneered by Brahmins and later other groups came into it on the common ground that they spoke a common language, implying a common culture transcending other and lesser fractional loyalties and interests. As Nijalingappa pointed out to this writer, even in Old Mysore many Vokkaligas did not oppose it. It would be misleading over simplification of a messy

history to suggest either that Ekikarana was a Lingayat conspiracy or that the opposition to it in Old Mysore was a purely Vokkaliga operation! After all, our identities are always multi-dimensional, and, in fact, it may even be asserted that we have multiple identities. One can be simultaneously, and has to be, more than one identity- a Lingayat, a Kannadiga, an Indian an inhabitant of a place, belonging to a sex, and so on. These identities come into their own contextually! It is conceivable that a Lingayat or a Vokkaliga or a Brahmin participated in Ekikarana movement as a Kannadiga without losing other identities, just as it is conceivable to argue that a Kannadiga participated in the national freedom movement as an Indian without losing his Kannada identity. In India, it is very easy to hurl accusation of communalism against each other with plausibility, and that is precisely why one has to be over-cautious in employing this weapon against each other. While the play of sordid and narrow motives cannot be ruled out in such a complex historical process, what is really significant is that Ekikarana was an honest and laudable historical experiment to construct a legitimate regional identity based on language and the culture embodied in it. It is a moot point whether the experiment has succeeded, but one should not hope that in history verdicts can be a simple success or failure. Every success has a dimension of failure and every failure its own positive side-effects.

The third criticism levelled against him that he was hungry for power and that he worked for Ekikarana in order to realise his selfish ambitions, is even wide off the mark. It is a criticism that even his worst enemy cannot make. Nijalingappa's selflessness is a natural and simple one, and it can be easily documented. He wanted power or office, which he actually won, but then it does not follow that he is selfish. It is a naive

and simplistic understanding that power is a synonym for selfishness or corruption, despite Lord Acton's cliche that power corrupts. For one thing, lack of power can also corrupt one! In politics and in the domain of public life in general, what is crucial is to see the purpose to which power is put. It can be employed for selfish ends as well as for nobler moral ends. If Nijalingappa exercised power as a President of KPCC or an MP or a Chief Minister, the main issue is to what end did he exercise that power. Politicians are especially vulnerable to the temptations of power, and equally it is easy to make glib and unsubstantiated charges against them. In the case of Nijalingappa, it is virtually impossible to sustain any such charges. To offer just one argument to support this, he could have obtained more power or status by currying favour with the national leadership, but he preferred to sacrifice opportunism for the sake of his ideals. We have become so accustomed to identifying power with corruption that we find it difficult to believe in the existence of a person like Nijalingappa who believed in, and practised to the extent humanly possible, a politics based on moral principles and ideals. But Nijalingappa was such a person and he lives today as a symbol of the fast vanishing Gandhian political culture of morality and idealism.

A criticism that can perhaps be made with some justification is that he was not tough-minded enough to face crisis. This again is a critique that has to be highly qualified. Yes, if by toughness, one means ruthlessness and disregard for the rightness of means in the pursuit of even good ends, then Nijalingappa was perhaps guilty of being too much of a gentleman in a business characterised by ungentlemanly behaviour. The remarkable truth, however, is that he achieved so much as a man of action without sacrificing his innate qualities of fairness, courteousness and humanism.

# 5. THE CHIEF MINISTER

Before attempting to interpret and evaluate Nijalingappa's achievement and contribution as a Chief Minister, it is legitimate to ask the question : How does one do this ? This can be best done by looking at the role and functions of a Chief Minister under our political system, and then to examine Nijalingappa's record as a Chief Minister in the light of this examination. There is no question that the position of a Chief Minister of an Indian State is a very important position, demanding from its incumbent a certain type of personality, an array of skills and competence, and, of course, good luck in terms of favourable historical opportunities. It is thus a very complicated job and it requires a mastery of the balancing art. Given its complexity and its dependence on forces and factors outside the control of the incumbent, it is impossible to arrive at any precise black-and-white judgement of the record of a Chief Minister. Yet it is possible and necessary to pass some judgement on the work of a Chief Minister but always in relation to the historical situation and the contingencies that constitute the context of his opportunities and constraints.

The Chief Minister of an Indian State is under the Constitution, the effective head of the State Government while the Governor is a nominal head whose role is normally ceremonial but under certain circumstances such as the lack of a clear majority for any party in an election he can exercise real constitutional power. Therefore, the first and the foremost function of the Chief Minister or CM is to run the State administration. In doing this, he is assisted by a Council of Ministers, chosen by himself from among the party legislators and a permanent bureaucracy. In this capacity, he has to

co-ordinate the work of his ministerial colleagues and the bureaucracy. This involves both political management and administrative leadership. He is responsible for the policies of the Government as well as their implementation. Secondly, he is also the leader of the party in the legislature , and this involves a different skill, that of debating to make acceptable a policy or a programme through facts, figures and careful reasoning. It may also involve the employment of the art of rhetorics. While the first role involves handling of relations between himself and his political colleagues, the second involves the relations between what is called the political executive and the bureaucracy. Thirdly, he has to maintain a public image as the leader of the State. This may involve the somewhat vaguely definable attribute known as charisma, public acceptability through his personality. This is needed also during election times. Fourthly, he is one of the two leaders of the party, the other being the President of the State unit of the ruling party. In this role, politically the most intractable role, his job is to maintain harmonious relations between the legislature party and the party organization outside the legislature. In the histories of many parliamentary democracies, and ours is one, this role has proved to be the most delicate. Also as the leader of the House, he has to maintain reasonable relations with the opposition in the House. This, again, is a very difficult role given the oppositional nature of the relationship. Fifthly, and most importantly, he heads a Government within a federal or quasi-federal constitutional set-up. Given the fact that in India, the State Governments depend crucially on financial assistance from the Centre, it becomes one of his toughest jobs to see that good relations are maintained between the State Government and the Centre. His job becomes relatively easy if the same party rules the roost at the State and the Centre, a luxury which, since 1967, most State Governments have found it impossible

to avail of. If, however, a different party is in command at the Centre, then the CM's task becomes tougher, taxing heavily his skills of administrative and political management. Sixthly, and increasingly, he is drawn into the task of economic management. This involves paying serious attention to the problems of economic development in the industrial, technological and agricultural domains. Even if there is no direct involvement, a CM has to see that harmonious relations exist between the State and the economy, and within the economy between capital and labour. Seventhly and lastly, the CM or for that the PM (Prime Minister), will be increasingly involved in the task of achieving social justice in societies undergoing the social revolution of modernization. This role involves both a moral and political commitment to the goal, and the ability to translate that commitment into policy and programme.

Before giving an account and assessment of Nijalingappa's record as a Chief Minister of Mysore, as it was called during his two tenures as CM, a brief digression into the history of the Ministries in the pre-integration but democratised Old Mysore State is necessary as a back-drop of political culture and tradition that dominated and continues to dominate to this day the functioning of the executive under parliamentary democracy in India in general. This culture may be designated as a factional culture in which the ruling party is fragmented by factional in-fights, and its energy, especially that of the CM, gets wasted mostly in managing and containing the intra-party factionalism, with the threat of the opposition virtually marginalised ! A full-flēdged responsible and representative democracy was first installed in Old Mysore State in October, 1947 as a result of the struggle for democratic Government in the State. In that month, a fully responsible Ministry took office with K.C.Reddy as the first CM of the State. Anyone who has

any idea of the history and nature of a modern democracy, whether parliamentary or presidential, need not be surprised that the new political system came to be characterised by factionalism, communalism and political amorality, fuelled by personal aspirations of ambitious and power-hungry politicians. This is natural because a democratic political system is an open system in which there is institutional access to power for all groups and individuals. It thus generates an ethos of intense political conflict, political intrigue and politicisation of hitherto non-political groups and interests. Social phenomena tend to be increasingly converted into political phenomena ! In Mysore, the new democratic system aggravated the communal conflict between the Vokkaligas and the Lingayats, and personal ambitions overpowered and obliterated the duties and responsibilities of public power and office. This led to a situation of instability and fluidity due to internal conflicts and tensions in the ruling party. The CM and his ministerial colleagues were forced to invest most of their time and energy in countering, not the opposition parties but the enemy within. This situation is further complicated by the intervention of the party's Central leadership out to promote its own interests. This intervention plays a crucial role in State politics because the Centre commands resources on which the State Governments have to depend. K.C. Reddy's Ministry had a relatively smooth sailing thanks to the CM's personal equation with Prime Minister Nehru. The CM who came as his successor, K. Hanumanthaiah a blunt-spoken person with a mind of his own, came inevitably into frequent trouble with the Centre, but his administrative acumen and calibre proved to be his resource in fending off destabilising Central interventions. But the CM was, however, forced to face the problems of internal factionalism arising out of communal conflicts and personal rivalries. Nijalingappa himself had a problem with Hanumanthaiah because the former

held that the latter had inducted into his Ministry corrupt and unprincipled persons. From Nijalingappa's diary entry for April 1952 it appears that his relations with Hanumanthaiah soured also because he suspected that the former sought the guidance of Nijalingappa's political rival Siddaveerappa. Nijalingappa noted that Hanumanthaiah also approached him for such guidance, presumably to neutralise the effect produced by his meeting with Siddaveerappa. Hanumanthaiah's personality seems to have undone him, especially his ego that had been fed by political sycophancy. The fall of his Ministry was due to personal conflicts and not due to any doctrinal, ideological or policy conflicts. Nijalingappa might have played some role in this downfall, though this can only be conjectured from the frequent opinion aired against the continuance of Hanumanthaiah's Ministry in Nijalingappa's diary entries for 1954. After the exit of Hanumanthaiah as CM, the stage was set for the conflict over the choice of his successor. The chief contestants were Sahukar Chennaiah and H.K. Veeranna Gowda. Nijalingappa wanted a third person, preferably a person like Channigaramaiah to succeed Hanumanthaiah. Against his will, Kadidal Manjappa became the Chief Minister but he also knew that Manjappa was a man of integrity and of a personable character.

Thus, the kind of fate to which Chief Minister and his Ministry were subjected during Nijalingappa's two tenures as CM during 1956-57 and 1962-68 should be seen as a continuation of the new post-Independence Congress political culture of factionalism and internal fission.

The new expanded Mysore State came into being on the basis of an Act of the Indian Parliament on 1st November 1956. The erst-while ruler of the State, Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, was appointed as the first Governor of the new State. It was in

the fitness of things that the man who had spent most of his life in the struggle for the establishment of the new State should have become its first Chief Minister. It was indeed a recognition of his record in this regard that he was elected CM, inspite of the fact that he was not at the time a member of the Assembly. The new State was inaugurated on 1st November 1956 at 3.30 P.M., at the Central College Maidan by the President of India, Rajendra Prasad. Nijalingappa announced a 12 man Ministry, including himself. The other members were Kadidal Manjappa, A.B.Shetty, M.P.Patil, C.M.Poonacha, H.S.Rudrappa, Jagannathrao Chandarki, T.Mariyappa, M.V.Rama Rao, R.Channigaramaiah, Bheemappa Naik and H.K.Veeranna Gowda. In terms of sub-regional identity, the overwhelming majority, eight including the CM, hailed from Old Mysore. The other four sub-regions had one each - A.B.Shetty from Madras, M.P.Patil from Bombay Karnataka, C.M.Poonacha from Coorg, Jagannathrao Chandarki from Hyderabad Karnataka. In terms of caste identity three including the CM, were Lingayats, two Vokkaligas, one Bunt from South Kannada district, one Coorg, one Brahmin, one Harijan and one from a backward class group. It was a reasonably balanced Ministry in terms of territorial and communal representation, given the shortness of time and the novelty of the situation. One gets the impression that Nijalingappa was guided more by territorial considerations than by communal considerations. This obscure rural poor boy whom history had catapulted to the most important job in the State, was not intimidated by it. He was cool and did not lose his customary sense of humour. A correspondent asked him whether he would don the usual Mysore turban or a Gandhi cap. Obviously, it was a dig at the Mysore sartorial style. Nijalingappa immediately replied laughing, "The turban is definitely out. When I feel cold I shall wear a cap. If not, I shall remain bare headed!" The Ministry formation, always a

tricky job of tight-rope-walking, did not seem to have been easy for Nijalingappa. In fact, Nijalingappa was able to announce his Ministry one day later than scheduled because he was trying to persuade one of the powerful leaders from Old Mysore, S.Chennaiah, to join his Ministry, but without success. This was explained by Chennaiah himself in a press statement and he also said that he had refused the invitation after giving the matter considerable thought. In his broadcast on 1 November 1956, Nijalingappa hoped that the linguistic states would strengthen the nation but that we should be prepared to change them if they were found harmful to national interest. This was just a beginning and the new State had to be built up. It was already doing well but needed to do better in the areas of agriculture, irrigation, forest-wealth, ship-building, fisheries and tobacco. Karnataka was rich in natural resources. But the State could not achieve its goals without Central assistance, and their overall goal was to establish a welfare state or *Kalyana Rajya*. The State had to face a special problem because of the integration of five separate systems of administration with separate structures, and were unequally developed. There was first and foremost, a need for their emotional integration or *Bhavaikya*. Of course, it was already there as demonstrated by the Ekikarana movement but it had to be stepped up. One of the head-aches of a CM is the distribution of the portfolios, which may cause dissatisfaction among his colleagues. Nijalingappa handled this issue with apparent success. The CM took charge himself of General Administration, Civil Service, removal of corruption, Public Service Commission, and Nationalization of Kolar Gold mines. Kadidal Manjappa got Education, A.B.Shetty Health, M.P.Patil Revenue, C.M.Poonacha Commerce and Industry, H.S.Rudrappa Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Jagannathrao Chandarki Excise, Labour and Rural Industries, T.Mariyappa Finance, Welfare of Weaker

Sections excluding, SCs and STs, M.V.Rama Rao Law, Information, Home and Transport, R.Channigaramaiah Local Self-Governnment, ST and SC Welfare, Bheemappa Naik Co-operation, Marketing and Sarvodaya, H.K.Veeranna Gowda Public Works and Electricity. After announcing the portfolios, the CM added that the functioning style of the new Government would be to avoid pomp and show and follow simplicity and a business-like approach. But the press carried the news that Ambali Channabasappa who was then ill would be taken as the thirteenth minister after his recovery. Nijalingappa had a tough job on hand as it involved co-ordination of five diverse areas. A press report dated 8th November 1956 from Hubli stated, for instance, that the new Government had not yet established proper lines of control and communication with its local offices, thus causing inconvenience to the administration as well as the public.

In fact, one of the major initial problems facing Nijalingappa as CM was to set up a reasonably functional administrative system. At the All Mysore State Uppara Sammelana in Shimoga on 8th November, 1956, inaugurated by S.V. Krishnamurthy Rao, Vice-chairman of Rajya Sabha, the CM exhorted the officials to act as friends, philosophers and guides to the people. The Chief Secretary of the new Government, P.V.R. Rao, told the press in Bangalore on 10th November 1956 that a huge army of non-gazetted officers from Hyderabad, Coorg and Madras had landed in the State capital, and they had to be accommodated. He claimed that the Government had cleared most of these cases. One is struck by Nijalingappa's keen involvement in the nitty-gritty details of administration. Releasing the Second Five Year Plan for Mysore, during the inauguration of the state unit of the research group IMRUP, Nijalingappa announced that the unit would study the

administrative structure in the State from the perspective of the Socialist Pattern of Society to which the Government was committed. One of the major issues confronting the new Government was diversity in the tenancy laws obtaining in the five sub-regions. But this issue was complicated by the fact that there existed differences of opinion as to how one should go about it. The Bombay Karnataka law is a case in point. A majority of officers and legislators from this sub-region met on 17th November in Dharwad to demand that the existing Bombay tenancy law should be changed as it neglected the interests of the *Raita* (peasant) and landlord. M.P. Patil, Minister for Revenue presided over it. The Minister stated that a uniform law would be hammered out.

As Nijalingappa had earlier stated in his broadcast to the people of the State, he regarded it as a major job to persuade the Centre to extend maximum financial aid to the State. On 22nd November, within weeks of the inauguration of the State, he discussed with the Central Ministers the knotty problems facing his State. He met Nehru and the Congress President U.N. Dhebar and assured them that the State Congress was getting more united, and this was going to be a strength for his Government. Specifically, he discussed with the Railway Minister, the Mangalore-Hassan line, Hubli-Karwar line, greater railway facilities for the districts of Bellary and Belgaum, and the need for increasing the speed of the trains in the State. He met the Minister for Agriculture to prevail upon him to extend greater help in the development of fisheries and deep sea-fishing in the State. He also told the Minister that a fisheries expert from Canada was visiting the State. With the Irrigation Minister, he pleaded for the speeding up of the Ghataprabha Hydro-electric Project, the Malaprabha Project and the Upper Krishna Project. With the Planning Commission, he raised the question

of developing and modernizing the Mangalore Port, and also the need for developing the ports of Karwar, Bhatkal and Malpe. After his return from Delhi, his first visit to the capital after he had become the CM, Nijalingappa told the press in Bangalore on 23rd that emotional Ekikarana had been achieved but the integration of the five administrative systems, service conditions and laws had yet to be sorted out. He said that it would take a longer time as it was a complicated issue. He also claimed that everybody at the Centre he met was sympathetic to the needs of the State. A major economic act of Nijalingappa's Government was the nationalization of the Kolar Gold Fields. It was taken over from John Taylor Company on 29th November, 1956 after eighty years of foreign ownership by paying a compensation of 164 lakh rupees, of which a cheque for only 123 lakhs was handed over to the Managing Director of the Company, S.T.M. Taylor, by Nijalingappa. It was characteristic of him that he thanked the Company for its services to the State. The Englishman, equally courteous, assured help in the future working of the Gold Fields.

At the meeting of the National Development Council held on 11th December 1956, Nijalingappa pleaded strongly that they should give importance to the Ghataprabha Dam and Malaprabha Dam Projects in the State. He also urged the Centre to supply rice to Dharwad and Bijapur districts and Bangalore city. He informed the Council that the State already had big Projects like the Sharavati, Bhadra and Tungabhadra, and it needed smaller projects as well. The State Government, alive to the problems of administrative management, issued an order which fixed the salaries and allowances of Ministers. As may be expected from a CM like Nijalingappa, wedded as he was to simplicity and economy, they were on a modest scale. The monthly salary of a Minister was Rs.900/- supplemented by

a car allowance of Rs.200/- and a House Rent allowance of Rs.250/-. A Minister's electricity consumption was restricted to Rs.35/- and they were not allowed to engage in any business or commercial activity. This is a far cry from what is happening today. For the MLAs, when they attended the sessions, their daily allowance was Rs.12 - 50, if they stayed in MLAs Hostel and Rs.16/- if they stayed outside !

The party, under Nijalingappa's leadership was gearing for the General Elections to be held in early 1957. In this connection, on the 17th of December, a meeting of the MPCC was held in Mysore Town Hall to kick off the Congress election campaign. It was attended by Kamaraj. Addressing the meeting, Nijalingappa asserted that the Congress must choose its candidates on the basis of their merit, personal integrity, truthfulness, service-mindedness and competence, and not on caste or personal considerations. He confessed that, in the last elections, the Congress had not done this. But this time if they didn't do it, they would lose their credibility in the eyes of the public. In his address to the joint Houses of the legislature on the 19th, the Governor enunciated the policy of Nijalingappa's Government. First, the address mentioned as per the Government's policy the reform of tenancy laws was such that the ryot received adequate reward for his labours, involving the abolition of absentee landlordism and the exploitation of the ryot. Secondly, the Government would complete the process of transferring to Mysore State public transport services from their earlier jurisdictions. Thirdly, the Government was committed to a policy of expanding technical education by establishing more Engineering and Medical Colleges. Fourthly, its policy was to bring the diverse laws currently prevailing in different sub-regions under a single system of laws. Fifthly, the Government gave policy priority to Irrigation Projects. Finally, it recognised

as another priority area the production of energy and electricity as crucial to industrial development. During the zero hour on the 20th, a member, Mulka Govinda Reddy, raised the question of whether Nijalingappa who was not a member of the House, though elected by his legislature party, had the right to participate in the deliberations of the House. He pointed out that the argument that he could get elected within six months as provided under the Constitution, was not feasible since there were no by-elections in the offing. Reddy held that even if technically valid, his holding the office of the CM was morally indefensible. The Speaker, Kanthi, ruled that Nijalingappa's holding the CM's office, was in order. It is interesting that a similar situation arose in 1962 when the party majority wanted him to be CM even though he had been defeated in the elections. Perhaps recalling this earlier incident, Nijalingappa did not accept the office then, and preferred to install a proxy until he got elected in by-election ! But the Speaker also ruled that as a non-member, the CM had no voting right.

Soon Nijalingappa had to divert his attention from governance to electioneering as the second General Elections were round the corner. The process of finalising the list of party candidates for the elections proved to be a tricky and messy business. On 25th December 1956 it was reported that three Congress Committees in the State, the KPCC in Bombay Karnataka, the Mysore Congress Committee in Old Mysore and the Hyderabad Congress Committee had prepared final lists. The three lists created widespread dissatisfaction among party men, and the Central Parliamentary Board, the final arbiter, was bombarded by alternative lists prepared by dissidents like Janardanrao Desai, Kollur Mallappa, K.F. Patil and T.R. Nesvi. Two dominant criticisms levelled were that the minorities had

been ignored and that factionalism had resulted in the dominance of one group at the cost of others. These complaints went before the Central team comprising Shrimannarayan, Debeswara Sharma and Margatham Chandrasekhar. In the meanwhile Nijalingappa, replying to the debate on Governor's address, said on the 24th that he was keen on an all-round development of the State, and appealed to all parties to co-operate in this task and, in fact, every citizen of the State should co-operate in this laudable task. Yet, the business of Government had to go on, despite diversions into electioneering. On the 27th, Finance Minister, T. Mariyappa said the new uniform salary scales for the administrative personnel would be soon implemented.

After discussions with the Central Parliamentary Board in New Delhi on the list of candidates, Nijalingappa, V.Venkatappa (President of the new Pradesh Congress Committee) and S.Chennaiah (President MPCC) returned to Bangalore on 31st December. They reported that, as the MPCC list was incomplete, the Board decided to examine the whole list afresh the following week. One of the major pre-occupations of Nijalingappa's Government was the integration of the services and rationalization of their salary structure. The Government at last succeeded in arriving at new scales after complicated calculations but gave the employees the option to remain in the old scales. The new scales were to cost the exchequer a hefty four crore rupees. Nijalingappa was scheduled to catch a flight on 3rd January to go to Indore to attend the Congress Session there. His car ran into an accident on the way to the airport after dashing against a truck, and he had to cancel his trip.

But he recovered soon enough to undertake his usual tours. On 9th January, he attended a meeting of the Vaddara community in Hassan organised to felicitate him, and, of course,

to make some demands on his Government ! Replying to the felicitation, Nijalingappa said that he was against hostels based on caste or community identities, though he himself had been through some of them. He stated that in the new context, they were not desirable whatever their rationale in the past. However, the existing ones could continue. He advised the community to seek higher education in such fields as engineering or medicine. His Government was prepared to give them financial assistance for hostels but no free land. He also took the occasion to oppose reservations on communal basis and hoped that at the end of the constitutionally guaranteed ten years the reservations would stop. But, of course, this was merely his personal view and his own Government could not avoid a reservation policy.

As for the forthcoming elections, six parties were in the field in Mysore, and they were the Congress, the Communists, the Socialists, Jan Sangh, Lokasevasangha and the Praja-socialist Party or the PSP. The real contest, however, was between the Congress and the PSP. The problem facing the Congress was internal disunity, especially within the ranks of Old Mysore Congress. We have already referred to this earlier. The internal dissensions in the Old Mysore Congress had a long history but the first clear manifestation of it was during Hamumanthaiah's Ministry which came to power in 1952. The dissidents moved a no-confidence motion against his Ministry but he survived. But this, not only did not put an end to dissidence, but it actually fuelled further anti-Hanumanthaiah activities. In August 1956, his Government was in a serious crisis and Hamunanthaiah was forced to resign. In the leadership contest which followed, he had to yield to Kadidal Manjappa who became the CM for a brief spell. But these events had left their mark on the party, keeping alive the old rivalries and hostilities.

These old wounds had not healed, and they continued to haunt the political life long after. This was what had made the finalisation of the list so problematic. On 12th January, S. Chennaiah left for New Delhi with a list of candidates selected by the MPCC. But this list did not seem to have pleased many, and a special letter against it was despatched to Delhi by the dissatisfied, its authors being Nijalingappa and four others. The letter suggested an alternative list which contained names not included in Chennaiah's list. This alternative list included the names of Badarinarayan, Ganji Veerappa, Kondajji Basappa and others. At the same time two members representing Hanumanthaiah's faction also left for Delhi to press their claims. On the 15th, after his return from Delhi, Chennaiah told the SK correspondent that the final MPCC list would be out before the 18th. In the meantime, the General Elections in the State were announced for 25th February 1957 and to be over within sixteen days. There were one crore and 82 lakh voters in the State, of whom 51 lakh and 86 thousand were men, and 48 lakh and 96 thousand women. The MPCC list promised to be out before 18th got further postponed to 23rd. The list did come out on 23rd, and Nijalingappa was given the Molakalmuru constituency in Chitradurga district. But the opposition to the official MPCC list did not abate. On 25th, 200 Mysore Congress members from Old Mysore met under the presidentship of P.R.Ramaiah, in Bangalore to question the official list. Among those attending it was K.Hanumanthaiah. He addressed the meeting for one hour. The meeting passed a resolution permitting three members from Hanumanthaiah faction in the official list to contest. They were Hanumanthaiah himself, Siddalingaiah and Kariyappa.

The election results gave the Congress 150 out of 208 seats, which was almost three-fourths of the total. Its closest

rival, the PSP, got 18 seats. The Raita-coolikara party and the Scheduled Caste Federation got two each, while the Communists could bag just one seat. As many as 35 went to independent candidates which must have included many Congress dissidents. The Jan Sangh and the Samajwadi parties drew a blank. Nijalingappa himself was elected with a large difference. Among the notable defeats was that of M.V.Rama Rao, Nijalingappa's ministerial colleague and friend. The Congress victory in the Lok Sabha elections was even more impressive as it won 23 out of a total 26, the PSP, the Scheduled Caste Federation and Lok Sevaka Sangha getting one each. Thus the Congress obtained a massive mandate to govern the State in 1957. Though the precise credit to be accorded to Nijalingappa in this achievement may be difficult to define, there can be no doubt that as the CM at the time and as a leader of the Congress, he must have played a crucial role in this spectacular electoral victory.

With such a massive mandate for the party, Nijalingappa's position as CM might be expected to be secure now, but such was not the case, as developments showed a little later. The scandal surrounding Hanumanthaiah's role in the construction of the Vidhana Soudha building when he was CM became news again with the Enquiry Committee set up to go into it now submitting its report. This event soured the relations between Nijalingappa and Hanumanthaiah, but as usual Nijalingappa stuck to his approach of transparency. On the 27th March, Imam wanted the report to be discussed in the Assembly. The Speaker Kanthi did not allow this on the technical ground that the report had not been formally tabled in the House. Nijalingappa took the opportunity to lay the bare facts to answer the criticism levelled against him by Hanumanthaiah. First, he thanked Hanumanthaiah for revealing what he had not known so far,

the fact that Hanumanthaiah was behind the unanimous election earlier of Nijalingappa as the party leader in the House. As for the allegation that he had used the report against Hanumanthaiah, Nijalingappa clarified the situation. According to his story, Hanumanthaiah had met him thrice to discuss the controversy surrounding the Vidhana Soudha building - first in January to ask whether Nijalingappa intended to set up a committee to make a judicial enquiry into the affair and appoint to chair it a person hostile to Hanumanthaiah. Nijalingappa had denied this and assured Hanumanthaiah that even if a committee were set up none known to be hostile to him would be appointed to it. He met Nijalingappa second time after the report was out to suggest that along with the report, the report of the engineers involved in the construction of the building also be published. Nijalingappa had ruled this out as not proper. A member in the House alleged that Nijalingappa had got the report published in order to become the CM. Nijalingappa, seldom given to anger, was visibly angry and called the allegation a disgraceful lie. He said that he had not met any member of the committee. To the question about the timing of the publication, specifically why its publication was delayed, Nijalingappa explained that the report reached the Government on 2 January and could be printed only by 8 February, and was published soon after the elections. Nijalingappa also said that Hanumanthaiah had agreed to help him as CM, but in the last five months he had no occasion to seek it.

Nijalingappa explained to the press that the Congress defeats were due to internal dissensions in the party and casteism. The defeat in Belgaum, therefore, should not be interpreted as over the issue of language. Nijalingappa said he was proud that in the last five months his Government had laid

the foundation for the new State. The Congress legislature party met formally on 6 April to elect its leader. The meeting was presided over by K.P.Madhavan Nair, the Central observer. Annarao Ganamukhi proposed Nijalingappa's name and Mrs Ratnamma Madhava Rao seconded it. Nijalingappa was elected unopposed. This unanimous election had been preceded by considerable behind-the-scene activities. S Chennaiah said that he was a member of the four-man committee set up to work out a consensus. At first four names had come up for consideration - those of Nijalingappa, Manjappa, T. Subramanya and Hanumanthaiah. No decision was taken at the first meeting of the Committee. At the second meeting, K.C.Reddy had played a crucial role in arriving at a consensus over Nijalingappa's final choice. Though Nijalingappa promised to announce his Ministry on the 15th, he postponed the date to 16th but even on the 16th he could not do so. Obviously there must have been a hitch. It was only on the 17th that Nijalingappa could announce his Ministry and that, too, a partial list. Out of the proposed 11-man Ministry, only eight names including that of the CM were announced. They were H.K. Veeranna Gowda, T. Mariyappa, H.S. Rudrappa, R. Channigaramaiah, C.M. Poonacha, M.P. Patil, and Mohammed Ali. All of them excepting Mohammed Ali were from the outgoing Council of Ministers. Explaining why the list was partial, the CM said that some friends whom he had invited to join had asked for more time to consider the offer. He would announce the other names on the 18th. Earlier he had decided to have a 10-man Council but eleven was necessary to give representation to all the sub-regions. He knew that eleven was not an auspicious number ! He would appoint only three Deputy Ministers whose names would be also announced on the 18th. But on the 18th he postponed the date of announcement to 19th. However, on the 19th he announced his full list. The three new Ministers

were B. Vaikunta Baliga, Venkatappa and R.M. Patil. One more might be added to make it a twelve-man Council. But the names of the twelfth man and the three Deputy Ministers were not announced. On 26th, only the names of three Deputy Ministers but not the twelfth Minister were announced. The three Deputy Ministers were Ramakrishna Hegde, Veerendra Patil and Grace Tucker. Soon after taking over, Nijalingappa made frequent declarations of his Government's policy commitments in public meetings. For instance, it was obvious that he attached the greatest importance to irrigation commitments. Inaugurating the 39th annual session of Kannada Sahitya Sammelana in Dharwad on 7-5-1957, whose President was Kuvempu (K.V.Puttappa), Nijalingappa assured full State support to the development of Kannada language and literature. Inaugurating the 8th North Karnataka Harijan Parishat in Belgaum, he expressed the commitment to Harijan uplift.

One of the essential pre-conditions for the smooth working of a Parliamentary executive is a harmonious and co-operative relationship between the legislature party and organization wing of the party. But in the new MPCC, Nijalingappa's political rival, S. Chennaiah, was elected as the President on 10th June 1957. Chennaiah polled 87 as against 81 polled by M.V. Rama Rao, Nijalingappa man. The efforts to arrive at a consensus had failed, and the elections became inevitable. The organizational culture had developed in such a way that without consensus the possibility of damage from factionalism was increased, and that when elections became inevitable election rivalries continued in the post-election period. In fact, great efforts had been made to reach consensus. To facilitate it, three other candidates, Hallikeri Gudleppa, K.V. Shankara Gowda and D.M. Siddaiah, had withdrawn their candidature. Thus this development boded no good for Nijalingappa's Government.

An important policy statement was made by the Government on prohibition. On 15-6-1957, the Finance Minister, T. Mariyappa, declared in the Assembly that the Government was committed to the policy of prohibition. Another policy statement he made was that the Government would assist in the development of Malanad region. One of the problems facing the new Government was the problem of equity between the five sub-regions with regard to Government inputs. There were complaints that the Old Mysore sub-region had bagged a disproportionately high amount of financial assistance from the Government. The Finance Minister denied it and assured the House that the Government would care equally for all sub-regions without discrimination. Nijalingappa defended his Government against criticisms levelled against it during the debate on Governor's Address on 19-7-1957 by asserting that they had done well in the brief time in which they held office. The Finance Minister made another policy statement by declaring that the Government would not raise money through public debt. In fact, the Government later resorted to raising money from public debt, as we shall see later. Nijalingappa's Ministry had earlier announced its policy of applying the communal G.O., of Old Mysore in admitting students to colleges. On 23-7-1957, Venkatappa, Education Minister reiterated this policy and defended it in the Assembly.

As noted earlier, a ticklish issue in running a Parliamentary democratic system is the maintenance of harmonious working relationship between the legislature and organization wings of the ruling party. In fact, this was a major irritant for Nijalingappa's Government. At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the MPCC, a resolution was passed calling on the two wings to work in co-operation, implying that it was either inadequate or wholly absent. On 30-8-1957, the press

reported that the Government would go in for public borrowing to the tune of four crore rupees. Another policy issue before the Government was the unresolved border disputes with the neighbouring states. On 4-9-1957, Nijalingappa told the press that high-level talks were going on to sort out the border disputes with Andhra, Kerala and Bombay States. He added that the Western Zonal Council scheduled to meet later in the month would take up the issue. At the same press conference, Nijalingappa denied a press report that the AICC had decided to continue the name Mysore Pradesh Congress Committee instead of Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee and that it had made Bangalore the head-quarters of the new Pradesh Committee. He said that, in fact, the question never came up before the AICC, and, in any case, this issue was the exclusive concern of the Pradesh Committee itself. The Government demonstrated its policy of developing all sub-regions by satisfying the long-felt need of the people of Bombay Karnataka for a Medical college in Hubli. The College was inaugurated by the Finance Minister, T. Mariyappa, on 6-9-1957 at a function presided over by R.M. Patil, Health Minister. The following day the CM was in Hubli to address the 6th Conference of Mysore State Vadda community. He promised the community, Government help in its development by declaring them as backward. But he also warned them not to depend too much on Government jobs. Nijalingappa's Government was among the very few to display awareness of the need for administrative reforms, and it announced the appointment of a one-man committee to examine the administrative machinery and suggest improvements. A.D. Gorwala, well known for his administrative expertise, constituted the one-man Committee.

Every now and then, attempts were made in the Assembly to get the name of the State changed to Karnataka, but with

little success. On 30th September 1957, a non-official resolution was moved by A.J. Doddameti for this purpose. But nothing came out of it. Nijalingappa had to face a minor crisis when the Maharaja cancelled his customary ceremonial elephant ride during the Dasara. Nijalingappa rushed to Mysore to sort out the matter. As already noticed, one of the problems confronting any CM in the State was the problem of intra-party dissensions and factionalism. Vinoba Bhave with the unerring instinct of a saint for earthly things, felt unhappy at the groupism and in-fighting that obstructed the smooth functioning of the Government. He chided the Mysore Congress leaders for this at a public speech in Bidar on 12th October 1957. At a later public meeting on 14th October on the grounds of the National High School in Basavanagudi, Bangalore, he appealed to the State Congress leaders to bury their differences and work unitedly for the progress and welfare of the State. He not only made speeches about it but he also initiated moves to bring about such unity. On 16th October 1957 he met K.Hanumanthaiah in the morning and Chennaiah in the evening in this connection. He had met earlier the leader of the third group (so it was believed), Nijalingappa.

Another important policy decision was to abolish all District Local Boards in the State and replace them by Taluka Development Committees in the light of the recommendations of a Centrally appointed Committee, the Balwantrai Committee. There were to be Grama Panchayats as the lowest tier of Local Government. Thus the Government was tackling multiple issues facing it with considerable speed and interest. In fact, the Central Home Minister, B.N.Datar, after a 2-day visit to the State, praised the Government for two significant achievements, namely, the integration of services coming from five different systems, and the uniformity brought about in the laws. But the

in-fighting within the Congress continued. On 2nd October, Gandhi Jayanti Day, Hanumanthaiah told a public meeting in Bangalore that the factional fights in the State Congress had reached a dangerous level and hence he had specially requested Vinoba to intervene to bring about unity. But the Government itself seems to be doing rather well, at least according to the visiting Central leaders. For instance, the Central Minister for Social Welfare, S.K.Dey, said in Bangalore that the State had a satisfactory record in implementing social welfare schemes. At a press conference on 9-11-1957, Nijalingappa found it necessary to deny that there was any political crisis in the State. Reading between the lines, one suspects that he made this statement precisely because he sensed it ! He also denied a report in a Delhi paper that serious differences had grown between himself and the Governor. However, he conceded that there had been a marginal difference over the elephant ride issue, the Jambusavari, but that had been patched up. He praised the Governor as a good Governor who did not interfere in the day-to-day working of the Government. Of course, there was a political crisis of survival for his Government, which was to become visible later. In the meanwhile, the MPCC at its Arasikere Session on 12-11-1957, passed a resolution by a majority to ask the AICC to change its name to KPCC. The resolution was moved by V.T. Magadi. It was a non-official resolution.

Perhaps, the most important and challenging task confronting the State Government, including the Mysore Government, was planned development within the targets set by the Five Year Plans. The Finance Minister, T. Mariyappa, took note of the criticism that work under Second Five Year Plan was not satisfactory, and promised to step up developmental activities in the State. In the meanwhile, the Centre advised the

State to postpone projects like the Sharavati Project to the Third Five Year Plan due to a severe crunch in foreign exchange reserves. But the State Government decided to implement the Sharavati Project outside the ambit of the Plans. Nijalingappa told the press on 14-12-1957 that the current electricity shortfall in the State could be avoided only if the 50 crore Sharavati Project was taken up within the Second Five Year Plan period. He added that since the Project did not require any foreign exchange input, it could be easily included in the Second Plan. Further, financial difficulty arose for the State when reportedly the Planning Commission slashed the Second Plan demand of 34 crore 94 lakhs to 23 crore 20 lakhs, a one-third cut. But it assured the State that if the Central finances improved, the Commission would reconsider sympathetically State's demand. The Planning Commission suggested cuts mostly in regard to hydel projects and education. The team that met the Commission was led by the CM, Nijalingappa, and included Poonacha, Mariyappa, Veeranna Gowda, M.P. Patil and Vaikunta Baliga. The Commission openly acknowledged its satisfaction with the State's efforts to solve the post-integration problems and of setting up a viable administrative machinery. At a press conference on 2-1-1958, Nijalingappa announced that, despite the cuts, the Government would go ahead with all its Projects. In particular, he declared that the Sharavati Project would not be abandoned. The CM ever eager to get the best deal for the State, took the opportunity, while inaugurating in Bangalore on 5-1-1958 a meeting of the Central Health Council, to urge the Centre to help set up a Cancer Research Hospital in Bangalore. He appealed especially to the Central Health Minister, D.P. Karmarkar, reminding him that he was a Kannadiga. He also called on Central assistance in increasing food-grains production by investing in agriculture, rural medical service and so on. One of the crucial ingredients that went into the Ekikarana

movement was the need for developing Kannada language by according to it its due place. Hence Nijalingappa's Government took pains to assure the people that this was a policy priority for the Government. At the Patrika Parishat in Bangalore on 22-1-1958, the CM declared his Government's commitment to a policy of developing Kannada, and that soon it would become the official language of the State.

On 4-2-1958, S.K. Patil, the Central Irrigation Minister, arrived in Shimoga on his way to inaugurating the Sharavati Project. He inaugurated it on 5-2-1958 at Linganamakki, the biggest hydel project in the country. Apart from Irrigation and Energy, a major policy concern of Nijalingappa's Government was social justice, specifically in the form of special benefits to the backward and weaker sections of the society. On 30th April 1958, the Government came under attack in the Assembly both from the Congress and the opposition for inadequate achievement in this regard. It was complained that the Government was not doing enough for the economic, educational and social development of these sections. Since the communal G.O., of Old Mysore was in origin a move towards social justice, perhaps the Government thought that it should be extended to other sub-regions, and announced to doing so in the Assembly on 1-5-1958. As a consequence, 57% of Government jobs were reserved for communal groups specified as entitled to it under the G.O. The Government also proposed to make reservations for admission to colleges but in a lesser proportion. R. Channigaramaiah, the Minister in-charge of SC and ST Welfare, announced in the Assembly on 2-5-1958 that the Government would soon appoint a committee to examine the plight of the backward classes and also monitor the implementation of the constitutional provisions for their welfare. Nijalingappa returned from Delhi on 6-5-1958 after attending

the meeting of the National Development Council on 4th and 5th, and held a press conference at which he said that the Sharavati Project was on, though not included in the Second Five Year Plan.

A storm was brewing within the ruling Congress party, which was eventually to dislodge Nijalingappa from Chief Ministership. The factional quarrels seem to have reached a point of no return, and the INC General Secretary, Shrimannarayan, was in Bangalore on 7-5-1958 to sort out the rift in the Congress legislature party. He held discussions with Nijalingappa and Chennaiah. The pro-Chennaiah group demanded a change in the leadership on the ground that the Government was not doing well. The pro- Nijalingappa group claimed that the Government was functioning successfully. The latter pointed out that the Government had a good record in the field of Irrigation and Re-organization issues. The pro-Chennaiah group, determined to oust Nijalingappa, had set up a five-man committee to chalk out a programme of action. Shrimannarayan met first Hanumanthaiah, and later saw the dissidents B.D. Jatti, H.M. Channabasappa, T. Subramanya, Kollur Mallappa and others. He also met the members of the Nijalingappa faction, Devaraj Urs and Hutchmaste Gowda. After a night session of the meeting of his Ministerial Council, Nijalingappa and the members of the Council of Ministers met Shrimannarayan. The following day, 8-5-1958, the Congress legislature party met under the presidentship of Shrimannarayan to sort out the leadership issue. Though Shrimannarayan was camping at Bangalore, Nijalingappa did not meet him. When the discussions were on, in the midst of party meeting, Shrimannarayan tried to sort out the differences. Nijalingappa himself tendered his resignation during the proceedings. Some legislators wanted to elect the leader to match the stature of

Nijalingappa, who had sacrificed in the cause of freedom. The name of T. Subramanya was deliberated upon, but members from North Karnataka and Hyderabad Karnataka suddenly announced the name of B.D. Jatti who was not a candidate. B.D. Jatti was elected as the leader of the party. On the morning of 8-5-1958, Shrimannarayan had a telephonic discussion with the INC President, U.N. Dhebar.

The new leader, B.D.Jatti, appealed to the members to co-operate in the implementation of Congress policies and programmes. Nijalingappa assured him of his support and co-operation. He told the press that he welcomed relief from CM's office as freedom to work in the wider field of national development. In the meanwhile Jatti went to Delhi to attend the AICC session where he discussed the issue of Ministry-formation with the Congress High Command. He was expected to return to Bangalore on 12-5-1958 or 13-5-1958. Thus ended a political drama, and also ended Nijalingappa's eighteen-month first stint as CM. Looking back at the critical eighteen months during which Nijalingappa took charge of the management and development of the unified Kannada State of Mysore, one must concede, without being uncritical that the record is impressive. It would have been more impressive if the poor CM was not perpetually harassed by the internal factionalism of his own party. Relative to this internally produced problem, the opposition did not pose a challenge to him. No doubt, the opposition did try to get a no-confidence motion passed against him, but that was a routine oppositional gesture rather than a real threat to the Government. The most significant achievement of Nijalingappa's Government was the successful tackling of the hopelessly tangled issues of integrating five different sub-regions with different historical backgrounds and institutional patterns. The second most significant achievement

was the laying down the foundation for the overall development of the State. Agricultural development was put on a sound footing by initiating Irrigation Projects. Industrialization was also promoted by setting up power projects linked to Irrigation via the hydro-electric schemes, since power supply was crucial to industrial development. Third, the Government managed to solve the knotty issue of integrating the services. Fourthly, the Government was able to bring about uniformity in the legal system, which had been earlier characterised by diversity. Lastly, perhaps not equally successfully, Nijalingappa's regime was able to move some distance in the direction of the goal of social justice by focussing on the welfare of the backward classes and the SC and ST groups.

But Nijalingappa's career as a CM did not end with his removal as CM after eighteen months. After an interruption of long four years, he staged a come-back as a CM in 1962. But that story can wait till these four years out of direct political power are seen in their proper perspective. Nijalingappa, to anyone familiar with his life and person, was not particularly keen on power through office, though he was always ready to shoulder the responsibility of office if he could turn it into an opportunity for service. But how did he occupy himself between two Chief Ministerships ? First of all, he could do the party work. Then he could get involved in activities aimed at promoting the welfare of the people. He could also serve the State at the national and state level by taking up non-official work such as membership or chairmanship of committees or commissions. Thus, there were avenues of serving the people and society for a leader of his kind who was committed to the ideals of public service. Technically, Nijalingappa ceased to be a CM after the Governor accepted his resignation and of those of his colleagues on 9-5-1958, but he was asked to continue

till Jatti formed his new Ministry. With Jatti taking oath as CM on 16-5-1958, Nijalingappa was formally no longer a CM. Nijalingappa as a regional leader was independent-minded, and thus he was likely to antagonise Central leadership. As Nijalingappa told this biographer recently in May this year, the relations between the two could not be regarded as cordial, though it also could not be called hostile. Nehru was reported to be happy over Jatti's election as the new leader, and he actually welcomed it on the ground that young, new blood was needed to shoulder the onerous task of nation-building. Jatti's Ministry retained some two members from the outgoing Ministry. Jatti did not even ask Nijalingappa to join his Ministry, though one can guess that Nijalingappa might not have agreed to do so. Moreover, his departure did not imply any policy shifts since all that Jatti did was to continue the policies and programmes of the earlier Government. It is also worth reminding ourselves that whether it is Nijalingappa or Jatti or anyone, the CM would have to work within the ideological and policy framework of constitutional liberalism, planned development and mixed economy euphemistically termed socialistic pattern of society.

On 2-12-1958, Nijalingappa got elected to the Executive of the Legislature Congress Party. He was one of the twelve constituting the Committee. There was a press report that at the invitation of Nehru and Dhebar, Mysore Congress leaders were to meet Central leaders to discuss the political situation in the State Congress on 13-12-1958. MPCC President Veeranna Gowda, former President Chennaiah, Jatti and Nijalingappa were the leaders so invited. On 2-2-1959, Indira Gandhi was elected as the President of the INC, and the other names for the post then in news were those of Nijalingappa and Kumbharam Arya from Rajasthan. She was expected to take

charge on 8-2-1959. Indira announced her Working Committee of 17 members. Of the five new members inducted, Nijalingappa was one. Nehru himself was not included but he was accorded the status of a permanent invitee. After their return from Delhi, Nijalingappa and Veeranna Gowda stated at the press conference on 7-4-1959 that the various industrial schemes started in the State should be developed expeditiously. These schemes included the Steel Plant, the Cement Factory in Tumkur, and the Aluminium Factory in Belgaum. In May 1959, Jatti's Government announced the reservation scheme for Government jobs. According to it, 57% were to go to the Backward Classes, 15% to SCs and 3% to STs. This meant that 75% positions were reserved and 25% were open . The new list of Backward Classes included Lingayats and Vokkaligas! It has become part of Indian political culture and tradition that leaders should function as teachers exhorting the people to lead ideal lives ! In some cases, such advice possessed moral weight because of the record of the leader tendering advice. Nijalingappa was no exception. For instance, on 29-6-1959, he presided over the first conference of Mysore journalists in Bangalore and exhorted them to uphold dignity of the profession and maintain a high level of professional competence so that they could generate new ideas and thoughts. Inaugurating the second Dharwad District Political Conference on 31-5-1959, Nijalingappa defended the resolution of the Nagpur Congress Session advocating co-operative farming. He also said that the Congress was a purely service-oriented organization, charged with the onerous task of nation-building. It had, therefore, no place for selfish persons. He urged such persons to quit the Congress. Another assignment came Nijalingappa's way when the Government of India appointed him as the chairman of a Task Force on 9.6.1959 to suggest a scheme for assisting persons willing to start, on their own, Co-operative Farming Societies with financial support

as well as other facilities from Government such as technical know-how and guidance. Other members of the group were Dr.Ramsubhag Singh, Sardar Gurubaksh Singh, V.K.R.V. Rao, B.D.Pande, Dr.A.U.Shukla, Dr.J.S.Patil, M.Jakhede and M.P.Bhargava. The next AICC Session was to be held in Bangalore. Naturally, its organisation was the responsibility of the MPCC. The MPCC President, Veeranna Gowda, announced at a press conference that Nijalingappa would chair the Finance Committee entrusted with the difficult task of raising funds and collecting donations for the Session. Plunging himself into party work with characteristic zeal, Nijalingappa addressed on 18.7.1959 a meeting of the Presidents of District and Mandal Congress Committees, and their Secretaries and Congress workers in Belgaum. He assured them that the scheme of Co-operative Farming Societies the party had mooted, would not affect private land ownership and its aim was to increase food production. Later addressing the MPCC Executive, he exhorted Congressmen to work without selfishness and claimed that the Congress alone could improve the condition of the common man.

In the meanwhile, the Jatti Ministry also seemed to be running into a fate similar to that of Nijalingappa's due to internal factional conflicts. On 8.8.1959, there was a press report that a large number of MLAs are trying to bring down Jatti Ministry which had just completed fifteen months of its life but they gave up doing so as a result of the meeting of Congress legislators. Hanumanthaiah praised Jatti's Government while MPCC President Veeranna Gowda referred to the rift between the Congress party and the Congress legislature party in the State. He called for a halt to this rift because it came in the way of the Government functioning. Even after eight months, the rift continued. Nijalingappa told the MPCC Executive that unless it was patched up, the Congress would

have no future in the State. In theory, all the leaders concerned - Jatti, Hanumanthaiah, Veeranna Gowda and Devaraj Urs - emphasised the need for unity. As part of the unity move, the leaders were expected to meet in Bangalore on 16.4.1960 to sort out the differences. The idea was to see that the president and the members of the MPCC Executive were elected unanimously, as required by the consensus culture of the Congress. After the meeting it was believed in the political circles that the unity talks had failed more or less, in which Nijalingappa had participated. He and Chennaiah held an hour's discussion but to no avail. After a discussion between Nijalingappa, Veeranna Gowda, Chennaiah and U.S.Mallya on 17.4.1960, it was decided to postpone the elections to the MPCC Executive to the first week of May, probably 6 May. A press report from Bangalore dated 5.5.1960 said that the meeting to elect the President and the Executive of the MPCC would be held on 6.5.1960, and the tenure of these offices was for two years. The team elected would be a crucial team as it would be in charge of fighting the 1962 General Elections. The contest was expected to be between two groups, though there were other minor groups in the fray. One of these groups was now controlling the Executive. The precise strength of the two groups was impossible to estimate. One group suggested for presidentship the names of Hallikeri Gudleppa, K.V.Shankara Gowda, Kollur Mallappa and Dr. Nagappa Alva, while its rival suggested the names of N.C. Nagaiah Reddy and Dr.Nagana Gowda. The names of Nijalingapppa and Chennaiah were also bandied about by many. Discussions were under way to arrive at a unanimous election without contest. On 6.5.1960, the presidentship of MPCC went to Nijalingappa after elections in which he got a majority of votes. There were only two in the field, Nijalingappa who polled 121 votes and N.C.Nagaiah Reddy who polled 85. The leader of the anti-Nijalingappa

faction, S.Chennaiah, prayed to God that he should persuade the new President to forget the differences and carry every member with him. Replying to the congratulations extended, Nijalingappa said that he was shouldering a great responsibility with many problems facing the party, and against a backdrop of rising rifts and disunity in the party. Explaining to the press his policy framework, Nijalingappa said on 10.5.1960 that though unity was important, it should not be at the cost of principles. He lamented that currently many Congressmen had forgotten its Constructive Programmes in their hectic pursuit of power and office. Politics had become a pure power game between self-oriented politicians.

Scotching the rumours to the contrary, Nijalingappa told the press on 24.6.1960 that none was trying to bring down Jatti's Government. He expressed surprise at the statement Chennaiah had made recently on the Ministry while laying the foundation stone of a Polytechnic, suggesting that it should be continued till the 1962 elections as any attempt to overthrow it, would weaken the party's electioneering prowess. Nijalingappa, however, had earlier conceded that the relations between the Jatti Ministry and the organisational wing of the party were not cordial. When the press drew his attention to this fact, Nijalingappa said that what he had said was an open secret and everybody knew anyway that there were factions in the party. But he pointed out that what was happening in Mysore was not unique and was happening in other states. Thus, it is clear that the party was back to a chronic crisis situation. The Congress President Sanjeeva Reddy found it necessary to come to Bangalore on 23.7.1960 to study the party crisis due to the rift between the organisation and legislature wings of the party. He was anxious to stop attempts to bring down Jatti's Government. Three factional groups met Reddy. One group

complained that Jatti Ministry was not functioning well and even named individual minister who had performed badly. They wanted a change of Ministry or at least some adjustments. A second group supported Jatti's Ministry and dubbed its critics as politically motivated. They were against any change in the Ministry. A third group complained that one group had taken control of the party, which led to a mal-functioning of the party at the district level. Perhaps unable to do much, Reddy declared on 24.7.1960 that it was for the local party to solve the problem and that the High Command would not interfere. After a meeting between Jatti and Nijalingappa, held on 24.7.1960, it was decided to hold a special meeting of the legislature party in the second week of August to discuss the problem of administration. Nijalingappa had asked the members not to make any attempt to move a no-confidence motion against the Jatti Government, at least until the next General Elections. Hanumanthaiah, too, was training his guns against Jatti Ministry. He called a press conference at his residence on 31.7.1960 at which he criticised the Jatti Ministry for representing only one group, Jatti's, and that serious allegations were there against its members. He thought that a new Ministry was the only solution. At a press conference on 9.8.1960, Jatti refused to comment on Nijalingappa's statements because he did not want to get embroiled in controversies. There was a newspaper report that a special session of the MPCC would be held on 11.8.1960 to discuss the party crisis. One group wanted Jatti to continue as CM but Nijalingappa faction wanted Jatti ousted, and it included members of Nijalingappa's Ministry, who had failed to win berths in Jatti's Ministry. This pro-Nijalingappa or anti-Jatti faction was supported by K. Hanumanthaiah and Kollur Mallappa. The meeting discussed for two days the allegations against ministers but apparently they could not be sustained. The discussion continued late into

the night on 13.8.1960. On the 14th Jatti told a press conference that cordial relations between rival groups had been restored. When the press pointed out that Hanumanthaiah had given a statement expressing his dis-satisfaction with the explanations offered by the charged ministers, Jatti refused to comment. However, he praised Nijalingappa for helping in easing the tension. On 17.8.1960, the press reported that a delegation of anti-Jatti faction would go to Delhi to meet the Central leaders and present their case against Jatti Ministry. On 28.8.1960 it was reported that Nehru would address the Mysore Congress legislature party on 16.9.1960. Nehru wrote a letter to Jatti in which he announced his programme. In the meanwhile, a delegation of dissidents left for Delhi reportedly on 27.8.1960. On 30.8.1960, a New Delhi news said that the Central leadership did not favour changing Jatti's leadership. This was confirmed by the Congress President Sanjeeva Reddy's statement in Bangalore that the High Command was not convinced of any need to change Jatti, and they also disapproved of any efforts to do so.

As scheduled, Nehru addressed Congressmen in Bangalore on 16.9.1960, strongly condemning the dissidents for trying to oust Jatti from Chief Ministership. He said that, in general, he was opposed to frequent changes in leadership. He characterised the allegations against Jatti's Ministry as trivial, relating mostly to administrative details. He condemned struggles for power and office among Congressmen. But dissident activities did not subside. On 10.10.1960, it was reported in the press that dissident leader Hanumanthaiah left by air for Delhi to persuade the Central leaders to intervene and help in the formation of a more broad-based Ministry. On the night of 11.10.1960, Nijalingappa and Jatti met at Jatti's residence to discuss the differences for about an hour. Both the leaders sent to Congress

President Sanjeeva Reddy their versions of the talk. The dissidents demanded that either the Ministry should be changed or they should be given permission to move a no-confidence resolution against Jatti's Government. A press report from Bangalore dated 22.10.1960 said dissidents' efforts did not pay off as the High Command continued to favour Jatti's continuing in office as CM. The dissidents did not lose hope and persisted in their anti-Jatti moves. On 24.10.1960, Hanumanthaiah declared that mere expansion of Ministry was no solution to the crisis and what was needed was a change in the Ministry. He believed that the High Command had an open mind on the question. The Raipur Session of the AICC decided against changing ministries in all states where such demands existed as in Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Mysore. But the Congress Working Committee did not discuss the internal factional fights in the party and the AICC ended on 28.10.1960. The party held elections to the powerful Parliamentary Board twice to elect five members but could elect only four as none else won the required quota of two-thirds votes. The four elected were Lal Bahadur Shastri, polling 280 votes, Nijalingappa polling 240, Y.B.Chavan polling 237 and S.K.Patil polling 227. But Nijalingappa told a press conference that no official communication had come from the Parliamentary Board on the crisis in Mysore Congress. Nijalingappa conceded that the Ministry would not be changed but he held that the Ministry could be restructured. The MPCC Executive had passed a resolution on 16.11.1960 to demand Jatti's resignation or alternatively he would be subjected to a no-confidence motion. The resolution asserted that, if Jatti Ministry continued, it would harm the party. The degree of indiscipline in the party may be measured by the fact that this resolution was passed in spite of the earlier decision of the Parliamentary Board to leave the decision to Jatti over the crisis. Nijalingappa was reported to

have met Nehru and Reddy to explain to them the case of the dissident group. At this meeting on 17.11.1960, Nehru told Nijalingappa that he was against changing Jatti Ministry. One Congressman, G.S.Prakash, criticised the MPCC resolution as irregular and unrealistic. Nijalingappa was visiting Delhi as the Chairman of Indian Oil Company, and took the opportunity to meet Nehru and Reddy. It was announced that the Congress Parliamentary Board would discuss the Mysore issue on 22.11.1960. On 30.11.1960, it was reported that the Congress President Reddy had invited Nijalingappa and Jatti for another round of talks as soon as they could make to it, to resolve the conflict. On 3.12.1960, Nijalingappa met Reddy to discuss the MPCC resolution against Jatti Ministry, and Jatti himself was expected to leave for Delhi on 4.12.1960. Later Chennaiah also met Reddy. It was reported that, as a result of these discussions, Reddy had come up with a compromise formula to solve the Mysore problem. The Parliamentary Board which was to meet along with the Congress Working Committee, was expected to take up the Mysore issue on 17.12.1960. Reddy who was visiting Bangalore, declared there on 15.12.1960 that there was no agenda of the Parliamentary Board to discuss Mysore issue, as it had already taken a decision on it. This meant that the 17th Board meeting was not going to take up the Mysore issue. On 18.12.1960, the Parliamentary Board authorised Jatti to expand his Ministry. But Nijalingappa told a press conference on 21.12.1960 that expansion of the Ministry was no solution to the problem. The only solution was, he said, to change the Ministry. He was reacting to the decision of the Parliamentary Board. On the same day, the leader of the anti-Nijalingappa faction, S.Chennaiah, asserted that they should abide by the Board's decision; otherwise it would amount to violating party discipline.

Nijalingappa seems to have a natural proclivity towards minor accidents at home. On 24.12.1960, one such occurred

at home on the evening when he got his knee-cap fractured. He was playing with his grandson. When he saw his grandson tumble across the compound, he tried to jump across the wall and fell. He was advised one month's rest. He was always a physically active person, and even the heavy burden of Chief Ministership could not keep him away from physical exertion ! In the meanwhile politics went on as usual. It was reported that Jatti would expand his Ministry after discussion with the High Command during the 66th Session of the Congress at Bhavnagar. Jatti made it clear that what he was doing was mere expansion, and not re-structuring of his Ministry. He said that he was doing so in order to restore cordial relations between the organization wing, apparently under Nijalingappa's control as he was the MPCC President, and the legislature wing which was under his control as he was the leader of the party in the legislature. Nijalingappa's stand within the party organization was boosted when Sanjeeva Reddy nominated him to the highest policy-making body of the party, Congress Working Committee. The party elections were soon to take place, and the MPCC unanimously resolved on 19-1-1961 that differences between the MPCC Election Committee and Mandal Committees should be settled jointly by Nijalingappa and Jatti with mutual consultations. On 24.1.1961, Nijalingappa and Jatti came to an agreement to resolve the party crisis, by which Jatti was required to induct four more ministers into his Ministry to represent the dissident group. Jatti was expected to announce the names on 25.2.1961. The two leaders also agreed on the final list of members of the Election Committee of the MPCC. As expected, the names of the four new ministers were announced on 25.2.1961, and they were H.K.Veeranna Gowda, B.V.Baliga, H.S.Rudrappa and Veerendra Patil. The Election Committee comprised M.V.Rama Rao, Venkareddy Hooli, M.V.Krishnappa, Hallikeri Gudleppa, Mali Mariyappa, S.Shrirama Reddy and

Shankar Alva. While this was the intra-party story, the opposition MLAs were also active as 65 of them staged a walk-out on 27.2.1961 as the expansion of the Ministry was purely communal. Anjanappa, an MLC criticised the expansion on a different ground, that it violated the norm of economy in administration. The opposition parties moved a no-confidence motion against Jatti Ministry and it was overwhelmingly defeated on 9.3.1961.

Though out of office, Nijalingappa, in his capacity not simply as the President of MPCC but as a natural leader committed to the welfare of the State and its people, went round, pleading for legitimate causes. On 15.5.1961, he presided over the 4th Malanad Conference in Madikeri and urged the Government not to neglect Coorg. On 24.5.1961, he addressed a meeting of Congress workers of Belgaum and warned them that they could no longer live by merely mouthing Gandhian slogans, or swearing by Nehru's name. Merely emotional approach would not suffice. What they needed were knowledge and commitment. On 29.5.1961, at a public meeting in Hospet, he said that the Congress was not a Tyajya Paksha, a party to be deserted ! While it was true that now the Congress was infested with many bad characters, they were fortunately a minority, and hence good people did not need to leave the party. One did not cease visiting the temple because the priest was of a dubious character. On 15.7.1961, it was reported that the MPCC had set up a National Integration Committee under Nijalingappa's chairmanship and Jatti was a permanent invitee. The State was in the grip of heavy rains and many rivers were in spate causing harm to life and property. As MPCC President, Nijalingappa was concerned about it. On 25.7.1961, he visited the villages affected by the floods of the Varada river to study the situation and console the victims.

The usual controversies appeared over the selection of party candidates for the ensuing General Elections, and as party President Nijalingappa was called upon to face them. On 8.10.1961, some complaints were made against the list of candidates in some districts, on the ground that they were based on factional interests, without taking into account the merits of the candidates. The complaints were submitted to the Congress President Sanjeeva Reddy and Secretary Sadiq Ali. On 13.10.1961 Nijalingappa as MPCC President took severe action of disbanding the Bangalore District Congress Committee and set up an ad-hoc Committee under Venkatappa. This was done in view of the controversies surrounding the Bangalore DCC and the complaints made against it. This incident is an example of Nijalingappa's toughness when he found it necessary. It underlines the point that Nijalingappa's natural politeness should not be mistaken for weakness and passivity. As usual, even his most aggressive action was grounded in procedural propriety, and he had taken this action after prior consultation with the High Command. As expected, the President of the disbanded DCC A.V Narasimha Reddy, attacked the move in a press statement, calling it unjust, unconstitutional and partisan. Jatti regretted it and said that it was especially unwarranted during a pre-election time as it might lead to disunity in the party. He added that he had explained the situation to Sanjeeva Reddy and suggested that a milder action should have been taken. At a press conference in Bangalore on 17-10-1961, Nijalingappa stated that he was not aware of any favouritism and partisan consideration in the choice of Congress candidates and he gave assurance that only deserving persons would get the tickets. He was responding to the statement of Jatti alleging that pro-government group was given a raw deal. However on 31-10-1961, Jatti claimed that the atmosphere in the party was now favourable to the production of a unanimous list of

candidates, but Nijalingappa, more cautiously said that the agreement was only to the extent of 60% to 70%. The MPCC met to discuss the Congress list of candidates. It became evident that the Election Committee was not united, and the differences within it reflected the presence of two differing groups. The main differences were with regard to the selection of candidates from Hassan, Chikmagalur, Bidar, Raichur, Coorg and North Kannada districts. One group comprised Nijalingappa, M.V. Rama Rao, M.V. Krishnappa, Hallikeri Gudleppa and Shankar Alva, while the rival group comprised Jatti, Mali Mariyappa, Venkareddy Hooli and Shrirama Reddy. After a long discussion and negotiation, from 20-10-1961 to 17-11-1961, the MPCC finalised its list of candidates. It had to choose 208 for the Assembly and 26 for the Lok Sabha. But even so, the so-called finalisation was possible for only 40% of the candidates. The finally final list, so to say, was out on 19-11-1961 at the end of deliberations lasting 24 days. Unanimity had been possible only in the case of 77 Assembly seats and 8 Lok Sabha seats. The rest were all the result of bargaining and negotiation. The MPCC left the decision on Karmarkar, Datar, Rachaiah and Ganamukhi to the Parliamentary Board. After returning from Delhi on 8-12-1961, Jatti welcomed the final list issued by the Central Parliamentary Board as satisfactory. He said it represented unanimity, not partisan conflict, a unanimity that had eluded them in Bangalore but achieved in Delhi ! He praised the Board for its grasp of the positions taken by himself and Nijalingappa. With the noise over the tickets subsided Nijalingappa exhorted the MPCC to maintain discipline, unity and commitment. He warned that those violating them would have no place in the Congress. The party, he said, was not after numbers but sought quality from its membership. He was particularly pained that some left the Congress because they did not get the tickets. As may be expected, the tickets story

ended negatively with a number of disgruntled party members, some openly defying the official list. On 6-1-1962, one hundred Congressmen who were denied tickets, assembled in Bangalore and resolved to fight the elections as Independent Congressmen against the official Congress candidates. The meeting took place at Madras Woodlands Hotel and it was presided over by S. Kariyappa, a member of the Mysore Congress Legislature Party. On 11-1-1962, Nijalingappa declared in Bangalore that no changes would be made in the official list of Congress candidates. A report from Delhi dated 17-1-1962 stated that the High Command had not suggested that Nijalingappa should be the new leader of the Legislature Congress party in the State, as this issue could be raised only after the elections and during the post-election situation. In the meanwhile the ticket-denied Congressmen carried on their activities against official candidates.

In Chintamani constituency in Kolar District, the official candidate approved by the High Command was M. C. Anjaneya Reddy but the MPCC had given the ticket to Seetappa. This was an unusual case of lack of discipline on the part of Pradesh Congress rather than the indiscipline of an individual Congressman denied ticket contesting against the official candidate. The AICC Secretary Rajagopalan asked Nijalingappa to persuade Seetappa to withdraw his candidature, and if this was not done, the AICC might have to take action against MPCC. MPCC itself mounted disciplinary action against Congressmen standing against official candidates. On 15-2-1962, Nijalingappa launched the Congress election campaign at Shimoga. On 17-2-1962, it was reported that the General Elections campaign in Mysore, would start from 19-2-1962. There were 1,12,54,254 voters in the State. The Congress won a clear majority with 138 seats out of a total of 208 but

Nijalingappa himself lost the election from Hosadurga constituency, believed to be the result of a vicious conspiracy. The next best party, the PSP, won 20. The newly floated Swatantra Party got 9 and Communists 3. The Socialist Party was the only other Party to register nominal success by winning just one seat. The Jan Sangh drew a blank. The Independents won as many as 37 seats.

Jatti's Ministry resigned on 1.3.1962, to pave the way for the formation of a new Ministry. The new leader of the Congress legislature party was expected to be elected on 7.3.1962. Anticipating some hitch in the election of the leader of the party in the Assembly due to well-known factionalism, Congress President Sanjeeva Reddy invited Nijalingappa and Jatti to Delhi for a discussion. In the meanwhile, it was reported that Nijalingappa's supporters were working hectically for his leadership, and Nijalingappa is believed to have agreed to be the leader if elected. The technical snag that he was not elected could be overcome if he got elected in a by-election within six months but there would still be a moral taint because he was a defeated candidate. His supporters, however, insisted that he should be allowed to contest for leadership. They also argued that Nijalingappa's defeat was a political vendetta, and hence was not, morally speaking, a real defeat! Naturally, Jatti group did not accept these arguments. Both Nijalingappa and Jatti advanced their claims to leadership. However, it became known that the High Command did not favour Nijalingappa becoming the leader and wanted Jatti to continue. Nijalingappa, after his return from Delhi, said if they did not allow him to contest they should allow a person of his choice to contest and become a stand-in for him till he won a by-election. On 7.3.1962, Lal Bahadur Shastri arrived in Bangalore to hammer out a solution to the leadership struggle between Nijalingappa and Jatti.

Shastri told the press later that his task had been made easy by Nijalingappa agreeing not to contest after his advice. No consensus candidate could emerge, and S.R.Kanthi, S.Nijalingappa man, was elected after Shastri met each member individually to ascertain his/her will. The High Command advised Kanthi to form a Ministry representing both the groups. It was believed that Kanthi felt that this is not feasible. Out of the proposed Ministry of 14 Ministers and 10 Deputy Ministers, Kanthi was able to form a Ministry of nine ministers and two deputy ministers. The Ministers were Kanthi himself (CM), M.V. Krishnappa, M.V. Rama Rao, R.M. Patil, Yashodhara Dasappa, K. Mallappa, Dr. Nagappa Alva, Veerendra Patil and B. Rachaiah. The two Deputy Ministers were both Muslims, H.R. Abdul Gaffar and Maqsood Ali Khan.

The Ministry formation for Kanthi had not been easy because the High Command had insisted on the inclusion of Jatti-men in the Ministry. In the meantime, it was reported that Nijalingappa would stand for a by-election from Bagalkot and the incumbent B.T.Murnal had already sent in his resignation to the Assembly seat to the Speaker. Nijalingappa got elected from Bagalkot unopposed as the other five candidates withdrew their candidature. When Kanthi became the CM, it was known that he was a stop-gap man, and would make room for Nijalingappa after the latter got elected to the Assembly. Hence, in the eyes of the public, he was dubbed as a Bharata! In fact, Kanthi seemed to have been embarrassed by this image of himself, and perhaps secretly even resented it. On 8.5.1962, he said that the Bharata titlē conferred on him was a light-hearted joke, not to be taken seriously, and that he would function as a full-fledged CM, even if a temporary one. He made this statement in the Assembly. But he also added that from the point of good administration and State's overall

progress, there might be a change in the leadership ! On 11.5.1962 it was reported in the press that Kanthi wrote to President Reddy that he was resigning from the leadership. He also wrote similar letters to Nehru and Lal Bahadur Shastri. He said that he was doing so in order to facilitate the process of Nijalingappa's becoming the leader of the legislature party now that he had been elected as a member of the Assembly. He was doing this as the majority of Congress legislators wanted Nijalingappa as their leader. Nijalingappa was expected to take over the leadership from Kanthi in early June. On 16.5.1962, Nijalingappa arrived in Bombay from Delhi after discussing the leadership issue with the High Command. Kanthi disclosed to the press on 16.5.1962 that Nehru had replied to his letter in which he had offered to resign in favour of Nijalingappa, but he refused to disclose its contents. On 23.5.1962, Nijalingappa informed the press that the legislature party would meet at the end of the month to elect a new leader. But before that Kanthi's resignation had to be formally accepted. This the Parliamentary Board could do only when it met on 29.5.1962. Asked about groupism in the party, Nijalingapa said that if the groups were based on principles or policies, one could understand, but the groups in Mysore Congress were based on personal and selfish considerations. Therefore, they deserved to be condemned. He wanted the party to take severe action against them. Nijalingappa made a policy statement of his Government on an important issue agitating the minds of the people in Karnataka. That was the issue of Goa's merger with Maharashtra. Maharashtrians had claimed Goa as part of their State on the ground that Goa's language Konkani was a dialect of Marathi, a proposition challenged by the distinguished Konkani linguist Dr. Katre. Kannadigas feared that the merger would facilitate Maharashtra's ambition to grab Karwar and Belgaum. In his earliest formulation of the policy even before

he took over formally as CM, Nijalingappa asserted Goa should merge with Karnataka on geographical, historical and cultural grounds. On 28.5.1962, the Parliamentary Board approved Nijalingappa's leadership. The election of the new leader was scheduled on 21.6.1962 at 8-30 AM in the Residency and Nijalingappa was expected to be elected unanimously. The new Congress President, Sanjeevaiah, dropped Nijalingappa from his Working Committee. On 17.6.1962, Nijalingappa said that he would form a broad-based Ministry of 14 or 15 Ministers, retaining all the Ministers from the Kanthi Ministry. Jatti stated that his group would welcome and support a unanimous election of the leader. As a prelude to the election, Kanthi Ministry resigned on 20.6.1962 after being in office for 102 days Kanthi praised Jatti group for supporting the unanimous election of the leader. On 21.6.1962 Nijalingappa was unanimously elected as leader of the ruling party. At 11-22 A.M. the same day the new Ministry was sworn in by the Governor Mangaldas Pakvas. All the Ministers from Kanthi Ministry, that is Kanthi, himself, M.V. Krishnappa, M.V. Rama Rao, R.M. Patil, Yashodhara Dasappa, K. Mallappa, Dr. Nagappa Alva, Veerendra Patil and B.Rachaiah, were sworn in along with Nijalingappa as CM. Nijalingappa announced that he would complete his Ministry-formation within a week. As before, Nijalingappa continued his policy of encouraging industrial development along with agricultural development, with energy development as a key to both. On 23.6.1962, addressing the Second All-Mysore Merchant's Conference in Davanagere, he exhorted the merchants and traders to start new industries and promised substantial Government help if they came forward. Nijalingappa who continued to be the Chairman of the Indian Oil Company presided over its Governing Board on 25.6.1962 in Bangalore and urged it to start an oil refinery plant in Karnataka in places like Mangalore. This underscores the fact that he used every

available opportunity to promote the industrial development of the State. But he had other problems than development to tackle as CM, and he had yet to complete his Ministry-formation. After discussions with the Central leaders, he told the press on 27.6.1962 that he would come out with a harmonious list. He claimed that there were no real groups in the State Congress but only individuals. It was rumoured that he might not include Jatti and Kadidal Manjappa as there was considerable opposition to their inclusion. On 28.6.1962, he met Nehru to discuss with him Ministry-formation. It appears that the idea was to add to the existing ten ministers, two from Old Mysore and two from other sub-regions. The names frequently bandied about were Devaraj Urs, Narayana Gowda, Ramakrishna Hegde and M.R.Patil. Jatti was not considered but the High Command insisted on his inclusion. This meant M.R.Patil was out. However, Nijalingappa was categorical that he would not have Manjappa. On 30.6.1962, Nijalingappa inducted into his ministry B.D.Jatti, G. Narayana Gowda, Devaraj Urs, Ramakrishna Hegde and K.Puttaswamy. Instead of four, five were added to the Ministry. On 2.7.1962, the Ministry was further expanded with the addition of 8 Deputy Ministers - Grace Tucker, J.H.Shamsuddin, Y.Ramachandra, K. Prabhakar, Mallikarjuna Swamy, Kondajji Basappa, Alur Hanumanthappa and Dayananda Sagar. An innovation was the appointment of two Parliamentary Secretaries, G.B.Shankar Rao and H.C.Borayya. Jatti was assigned the important portfolio of Finance. Thus peace seemed to have been established between the main contenders.

The main problem facing governments everywhere and more acutely in developing countries is of course, the financial crunch. In India, the state governments have had to depend heavily on Central financial help to carry out their modest policies. But the other means of raising capital for development

was public borrowing. Nijalingappa announced in the Assembly on 4.7.1962 that the Government would raise 7 crores from public borrowing and 13 crores from the Government enterprises. In Parliamentary Government, the opposition parties keep the ruling party on its toes by criticising it, and in India the ruling parties have the additional problem of coping with attack from dissidents in their own ranks ! Another important policy area, was the promotion of Kannada language, literature and culture. In fact, it can be argued that this was a special commitment since the ideology of Ekikarana that fuelled the struggle for linguistic states was heavily dependent on Kannada linguistic culture. If anyone did, Nijalingappa should know it ! On 21-7-1962, he declared that his Government would strive very hard to promote Kannada language, and urged the people not to agitate in the name of Kannada language. A major problem that faced Nijalingappa's Government at this time was food shortage and near-famine conditions in many parts of the State. On 31-8-1962, Nijalingappa announced that the Government would draw up a comprehensive plan to combat the famine situation in the State. This involved, of course, a strategy of increasing food production by laying policy emphasis on Irrigation and Agriculture. On 1-9-1962, Narayana Gowda, the Agriculture Minister, explained to the press the Government scheme to provide famine relief by digging ten thousand irrigation wells every year.

Nijalingappa who was holding simultaneously the Presidentship of the MPCC resigned from the presidentship at the MPCC meeting in Chitradurga. Nagappa Alva and Ramakrishna Hegde resigned from their Secretaryship as they were Ministers. Mohammed Ali was elected unanimously as Nijalingappa's successor but only as a temporary measure till party elections took place in coming December. Throughout his

tenure as CM, Nijalingappa had to face criticisms of his pet project, the Sharavati Hydel Project. When the issue was raised in the Assembly, Nijalingappa admitted that in connection with the tenders, two contractors were overpaid to the tune of 50 lakhs. Shivappa, the leader of the opposition said that all sorts of rumours were circulating about this incident, and therefore he asked the Government to set up an open enquiry committee into the matter. Nijalingappa, as many times before said that there was no need for such a Committee, and anyone with a complaint could approach him to seek remedy. He explained that the contract stipulated that there should be an arbitration when disputes arose. It was this clause that had been responsible for this over-payment. Now the Government had decided to scrap this clause in future contracts. The opposition leaders were not satisfied with this explanation.

It is part of the game for a CM to handle situations of public discontent on contingent issues which took the form of hartal, bandhs, satyagrahas and strikes. It is an essential component of a democratic way of life, giving it a special flavour. Nijalingappa's Government is no exception, and it was called upon from time to time to handle such eruptions of public dissatisfaction, and it handled them generally successfully in the sense of making adjustments in Government policy to accommodate passionately espoused public demands. One such incident occurred when a meeting of Hubli merchants and traders urged the Government on 17.9.1962 to give up the idea of increasing taxes on goods, especially the food-grains, property and industries. There was a hartal successfully organised by the Karnataka Chamber of Commerce and Industries in Hubli on 17.9.1962. The opposition in the legislature in a democracy also keeps the Government on its toes. The extreme form of this counter-move is the no-confidence motion. On 21.9.1962,

Shivappa, the leader of the opposition in the Assembly moved a no-confidence motion against Nijalingappa's Ministry. The Speaker allowed it as it had the technically required support of thirty members. The Government came under fire because (1) corruption and bribery involved in the Sharavati Project, (2) the hardships experienced by the students due to the steep hike in college fees (3) the unconstitutional addition of three new ministers on partisan, and not merit basis, (4) failure to implement the land reforms, and (5) rise in the prices of commodities. The CM hinted at a majority shift on prohibition when he told the Assembly on 22.9.1962 that time had come for a review of the prohibition policy. He said he had also made a similar statement recently in Bombay. During the debate on the no-confidence motion on 27.9.1962, Nijalingappa persisted in his view that no irregularity or injustice had been done in the Sharavati Project. He said he was personally attending to the matter, and hence there was no need for a judicial enquiry. He added that while constructive criticism was welcome, there was no point in irresponsible allegations. On 5.10.1962, Nijalingappa said that the Central minister for Irrigation, Nanda, had written to him to say that an expert team of the Planning Commission would arrive the next week to scrutinise and assess the work done on the Sharavati Project, because it was the biggest hydel project in the country. The team was set up in view of the fact that recently work there had been slowed down and there were criticisms levelled against it. The Government was believed to have welcomed the idea. In the meanwhile Nijalingappa planned to tour Shimoga district with the intention of inspecting the work at Sharavati. The Planning Commission team left Bangalore on 10.10.1962 for Sharavati Project. J.H.Shamsuddin, the Deputy Minister of State for Irrigation, said that three crore rupees were needed to tackle the problem of persons displaced by the Project. They had to be rehabilitated.

It should be remembered that this was the time when Indian national identity and self-respect were considerably shaken by the Chinese attack on the country. The Chinese stopped the war on their own suddenly and apparently inexplicably. Thus, one of the concerns of the State Government was to raise funds as a contribution to the national defence. Nijalingappa turned 60 on 10.12.1962 but did not encourage any ceremonial celebration of it. This was especially because of the emergency condition created by the Chinese aggression. Addressing Congress workers in Bangalore on 16.12.1962 he warned them that, during the emergency created by the Chinese attack anyone trying to weaken the Government would be severely penalised, and he wanted them to repose full faith in Nehru's leadership. With regard to internal problems of the State, Nijalingappa showed great policy concern for the generation of adequate energy, especially electricity. Addressing the State Development Council on 12.2.1963, he said that the State was lagging behind in industrial development because of shortfall in electricity. He also declared that his Government was aiming to take electricity to every village in the State. On 18.2.1963, the Governor, inaugurating the Budget Session of the legislature, voiced the Government's policy emphasis on agriculture and electricity. With this policy commitment in view, the State Government asked the Planning Commission to give it 5 crore rupees for the Kali Hydel project. Both irrigation policy and the energy policy involved the crucial use of river waters in the State, and this issue was complicated by the fact that the rivers ran through more than one state, leading naturally to inter-state disputes over sharing the river waters. These issues are still with us very much. Nijalingappa assured the Assembly that the Government would protect the interests of the State over the sharing of waters of Krishna and Godavari rivers with the neighbouring states. Jatti, now Finance Minister, presented the State's second Budget on 1.3.1963, involving a deficit of 40 lakh rupees.

Sharavati seemed to dog Nijalingappa with fatal regularity. It was raised again in the Assembly by Kadidal Manjappa on 5.3.1963. The issue had become a standard weapon in the hands of Nijalingappa's political opponents, within and without the party. Manjappa alleged that some politicians had obviously made illegal money out of Sharavati Project and that the Government should come forward to present the relevant facts and figures. In the meanwhile, the Chairman of Electricity Board, Chennaiah (Kolar District) (not to be confused with S.Chennaiah, Nijalingappa's Chief Political Adversary), told the press on 6.3.1963 that the Sharavati Project was completing its first stage, but before electricity was actually generated, there was need for transmission cables and distribution centres to be set up, and asked the Government to provide money for this.

On 11.3.1963, Nijalingappa, accompanied by Veerendra Patil left for Delhi to discuss the Krishna and Godavari issues with the Centre. Another progressive scheme initiated by the Government was the scheme to provide legal aid to the poor, and Law Minister, Rama Rao, told the Assembly that they had already prepared the scheme. Nijalingappa complained after his discussion with the Centre, that the Centre's distribution of Krishna and Godavari waters was unfair to Mysore, which deserved a greater share. This was another item that gave the opposition an opportunity to assail the Government. The Samajwadi leader and MLA, and the leader of the opposition in the Assembly, Shivappa, condemned the Centre, and, by implication the State Government, because the new quantum of water given to Mysore meant that the State had to be content for the next 15 years with two irrigation projects. The emphasis of the condemnation was, however, more on the Centre's partiality to Andhra than on the failure of the State Government to get a better deal. The Government was keen on industrial

and commercial development of the State, and this involved improvement in transport. Industries Minister, K.Mallappa, told the press on 1.5.1963 that the Government had a scheme of selling manganese ore to Japan and, with the money obtained through it, to develop ports like Karwar. Long before the current craze for opening up the economy to multi-nationals, Nijalingappa's Government was prepared to contemplate it on a limited scale and without endangering our economic autonomy. For instance, Shamsuddin, Deputy Minister for Electricity in Nijalingappa's Ministry, told the press on 3.5.1963 that the Japanese giant company, Mitsubishi, was willing to offer technical help for the Kali Hydel Project. The policy of expanding industries was part of the developmental strategy of the Government. On the following day Nijalingappa told the press that 3 more co-operative sugar factories would be started in Bidar, Hiriyur and M.K.Hubli, thus maintaining the balance between the sub-regions. He said the existing factories at Mandya and Sankeshwar would be expanded. While the developmental impulse was given impetus, the CM was also aware of the problem of utilising the developmental benefits. For instance, he regretted in Hospet on 13.5.1963 that the Mysore Government had failed to make adequate utilisation of the Tungabhadra Project. Out of the 8 lakh acres expected to take advantage of its waters only 3 lakh acres had done so. He was, in fact, visiting the project as part of the work of the sub-committee on agricultural production set up by the Government, of which he was the Chairman. The other members of the sub-committee were Revenue Minister Krishnappa, Co-operation Minister Ramakrishna Hegde, Agriculture Minister Narayana Gowda, Public Works Minister Veerendra Patil, and the Deputy Minister for Minor Irrigation Alur Hanumanthappa. The CM was very vigilant about the rights of the State over river waters, and he condemned Madras Government on

17.5.1963, for diverting the waters of Krishna meant only for supplying drinking water to irrigation purposes.

The party problems continued to bother the Government and the CM. Some Mysore Congress leaders wrote to the Congress President Sanjeevaiah alleging that the recent elections to party offices in the State were irregular and corrupt. They wanted the results cancelled and enquiry held into the allegations. The signatories were all members of the anti-CM faction - S. Chennaiah, T. Subramanya, Kadidal Manjappa, T. Mariyappa, B. Basavalingappa, H.M. Channabasappa, A.G. Ramachandra Rao, H.Siddaveerappa, and Venkataramaiah and others. Chennaiah was at this time the President of the MPCC. But an official spokesman for the MPCC denied these allegations and said that out of 226 constituencies only in 6 it had not been possible to elect Mandal Samitis. That the Nijalingappa Government was committed to the introduction of the system of decentralisation or Panchayataraj at the rural level was evident from the fact that it had set up the Kondajji Basappa Committee on it. Its report came out in early June 1963, proposing the decentralisation of power at village, taluka and district levels. It also recommended a splitting up of larger talukas. On 7-6-1963, Nijalingappa himself told the press in Hyderabad that there was no irregularity or corruption in the Congress elections in the State. His political opponents, however, were keen on attacking him and his Government. They called themselves good Congressmen and they did not regard the elections as legitimate. They decided to meet in Bangalore to discuss measures to cleanse the Congress and strengthen it in the State. This was stated to the press on 7-6-1963 by S. Chennaiah and T. Subramanya. They complained that only one group monopolised the party and alleged that they had prepared an irregular voters' list and appointed election officers partial

to them. In the meanwhile, the election to the presidentship was to be held on 23-6-1963. The contest seemed inevitable as the two factions did not agree on a common candidate. It was expected to be between Mohammed Ali, Kollur Mallappa and H.M. Channabasappa, the former two representing Nijalingappa faction. Therefore, the Nijalingappa faction wanted either Mohammed Ali or Kollur Mallappa elected. Another name mentioned was that of Hallikeri Gudleppa, also a Nijalingappa man. The Nijalingappa faction which had the majority in the MPCC was expected to win out. Actually, Mohammed Ali was elected, polling 201 votes against his rival H.M.Channabasappa who polled only 23 votes ! Predictably Channabasappa characterised the election as unfair.

Though he was not a man naturally given to ceremony and pomp, Nijalingappa was not against using them for good ends. A big campaign was on in the country to collect gold from the public for defence funds in the wake of the security-consciousness generated by the Chinese aggression. On 2-7-1963, a spectacular ceremony was staged in Bijapur in which both Nijalingappa and Indira Gandhi were weighed in gold, and the gold thus weighed was handed over to the defence fund. Indira Gandhi weighed 108 pounds while Nijalingappa weighed 162 pounds. For this ceremony, the public had collected 1,18,526 grams of gold worth 15 lakh rupees. The ceremony was presided over by Sanjeeva Reddy, the Andhra CM. A few days after this function, his political enemies opened another attack on his group. On 5-7-1963, T. Subramanya charged the MPCC that the election to its presidentship was irregular. He did this at a press conference in Bangalore. He also criticised Hallikeri Gudleppa for violating the parliamentary norm by taking active part in the Congress party politics though he was the Chairman of the Legislative Council. They followed this

up with their standard charge against the corruption and irregularity in Sharavati Project. On 5-7-1963, T. Subramanya, S. Chennaiah and H.M. Channabasappa called a press conference at Chennaiah's residence to demand a judicial or impartial enquiry into the charges of corruption and irregularity in the Project. There was also an attack from outside the Congress party as well. On 11-7-1963, Opposition leader S. Shivappa told the press that a judicial enquiry should be held into the affairs of the Sharavati Project. He was particularly sorry that Nijalingappa had not fulfilled the many promises made in the Assembly in this regard.

At the national level, Kamaraj Nadar exploded the political bomb known as Kamaraj plan which was accepted at the AICC meeting in Delhi on 10-8-1963. There was unverifiable rumour that it was, in fact, Nehru's plan with Kamaraj serving as a facade ! This was a plan to get rid of unwanted members of the Government on the ground that the party needed the services of the senior leaders who should give up their government assignments. Many CMs were ready to resign under the plan. On 11-8-1963, Nijalingappa declared at a press conference that he was ready to resign under the Kamaraj plan. He asserted that it was easy for him to do this as he had always regarded the Government and the party as equally important. In his Independence Day message on 15-8-1963, delivered on the AIR, Nijalingappa exhorted the people to give up internal quarrels and work unitedly for the nation. This would lead to a strong and secure nation. On 24-8-1963, the names of the victims of Kamaraj plan were announced. Among the Central Ministers, were Morarji Desai, Jagjivan Ram, Lal Bahadur Shastri, S.K. Patil, B. Gopala Reddy, and Dr. K.L. Shrimali. Among the CMs, the victims were Bakshi Gulam Mohammed (Jammu and Kashmir), Kamaraj himself, Vijayananda Patnaik (Orissa), C.B.

Gupta (Uttar Pradesh), Vinodananda Jha (Bihar) and B.A. Mandoloi (Madhya Pradesh). There were press speculations that Nijalingappa's resignation might be accepted by the High Command.

Nijalingappa continued to proclaim his commitment to agricultural production as a critical developmental factor. For instance, addressing local ryots in Haveri, he assured them of government help provided they worked hard. He said that the Government was preparing a comprehensive plan to prevent the occurrence of famines in the State. He also continued his policy of promoting Kannada language and culture, and said so in the Assembly on 5-9-1963. He was replying to the debate on official language bill. His policy regarding industrial development and agricultural development as complementary was re-iterated when he declared in Davanagere that his Government would assist in the starting of new industries in the State. In the meanwhile the opposition planned to move a no-confidence motion against the Government. On 5-10-1963, the Assembly agreed to discuss the motion. Moving it on 7-10-1963, leader of the opposition, S. Shivappa, mounted a severe attack on the Government for corruption, with Sharavati Project occupying the centre-stage. Among other charges, the accounts of the Khadi Board was prominent. The motion was defeated predictably with only 4 supporting it as against 115 opposing it. As if reflecting on the fragmentation of leadership in the State, K. Hanumanthaiah, addressing the public on the Nadahabba day (Dasahara festival) in Belgaum, said that Kannadigas were lagging behind in every field because they were disunited due to mutual jealousy. One wonders whether Hanumanthaiah did not include himself in the charge !

On 1st November 1963, Nijalingappa, in his Rajyotsava Day message, appealed to the people of the State to help him

and his Government to make Karnataka a first-rank State in the country, which was prepared to defend the nation. Even on this ceremonial day, Nijalingappa could not keep away from the Sharavati issue. He told the press categorically that no judicial enquiry would be held into the Sharavati case, but the Government might consider publishing a White Paper on it. This would cite facts and figures. He had personally studied the case and was convinced that there was no need for such an enquiry. He asserted that the critics were politically motivated and ill-informed. He also informed the press that he had urged the Centre to give at least 22 crore rupees for the Sharavati Project for the coming year. Speaking about his Government's taxation policy, Nijalingappa declared that they would not levy any new taxes for the next two years because they had already exhausted the taxability of the people! Once again on 14.11.1963, Nijalingappa reiterated in the Assembly that there would be no judicial enquiry into the Sharavati affair, but a White Paper would be issued in two or three weeks. The Jan Sangh Leader, Atal Behari Vajpayee, told a press conference in Dharwad on 19.12.1963 that a judicial enquiry must be held into the Sharavati affair because of the strong public demand for it. Coincidentally enough, on the following day, Nijalingappa, addressing a public meeting in Dharwad, dubbed the critics of Sharavati as disgruntled political opponents. He also asserted that only Congress was capable of taking the country on the path of progress. Oddly enough, in spite of the CM's assurance that no new taxes would be imposed in the next two years, the Assembly approved on 31.12.1963 a bill on developmental tax and water revenue on the use of water in tanks, canals and dams, by the ryots.

On the night of 4.1.1964, the Government had to face a law and order situation, which is a constant and routine feature

of modern, open and democratic systems. The Bangalore Transport Service workers had gone on strike and in this connection a huge crowd had collected at the City Market. The mob became unruly, according to the police, and they had to open fire on it. As a result, one person died and another was seriously injured. Like frequent breakdown, in law and order, corruption, too, had become an almost routine phenomenon. But the CM was determined to fight it. He told the press that his Government was contemplating the setting up of a commission to monitor and check corruption. It is a measure of Nijalingappa's acceptability at the national level that he was again nominated as a member of the Congress Working Committee by the President Kamaraj Nadar. He was among the ten nominated. A major and fairly prolonged law and order situation was created in the Old Mysore sub-region when 33-day strike was organised by students against the hike in college fees. Nijalingappa was able to handle it successfully and it ended on 15.1.1964, after Nijalingappa announced that he would appoint a committee to go into the question. As part of his campaign against corruption, Nijalingappa addressed a conference of officials at Vidhana Soudha and suggested that the law should be changed to make it possible to punish officials for corruption as well as for incompetence. At the national level, a positive step was taken to combat corruption in public places with the appointment of a one-man Vigilance Commission to enquire into charges of corruption against public servants. The retired Chief Justice of Mysore High Court. Nittoor Srinivasa Rao, was appointed as the first Commissioner.

The dissident Congress leader T. Subramanya an implacable political opponent of Nijalingappa, told a public meeting in Mysore that an alternative Congress to the ruling Congress would be created. He claimed that many senior

Congressmen were behind the idea. The meeting was also addressed by his other two major opponents, S. Chennaiah and H.M. Channabasappa. Hanumanthaiah felt that the Congress had accumulated lot of filth over the years. He told the press that the coming elections would eliminate the filth in the State Congress party. There was a need for new and younger leadership. He even suggested that Nehru should set an example by giving up office and function as an advisor to the Government. As for his own position within the State politics, he said that he had not yet crystallised it, and that was why he was not attending the meeting held by dissident leaders like Subramanya to launch a new Congress. He agreed that he was dissatisfied with Nijalingappa's leadership but was not sure about the extent to which he was dissatisfied. In short, he was a shrewd enough politician not to foreclose his options! Addressing a conference of State Co-operatives in Dharwad on 2-1-1964, Nijalingappa characterised India's problems as poverty, ignorance, unemployment and a sense of despair and loss of hope. He thought that the only way to build a new, vibrant and non-exploitative society in India was through co-operative institutions. His colleague and Minister for co-operation, Ramakrishna Hegde, suggested that government control over co-operatives should be minimum but at the same time absence of such control was also dangerous. A minor aside in Nijalingappa's busy public life was the usual physical accident ! On 15-2-1964, he slipped while bathing and got his left hand slightly hurt. As a result, he cancelled all programmes scheduled for the next ten days. Back to work earlier than scheduled, he addressed the State Development Council and suggested that it should prepare development plan for the State covering next 15 to 20 years. The internal squabbles in the State Congress party took their toll. The MPCC found it necessary on 23-2-1964 to expel from the party one of its

founders, T. Subramanya through a resolution. The meeting concerned was presided by the Congress President, Mohammed Ali, and Nijalingappa attended it. The meeting postponed the issue of expelling H.M. Channabasappa to its next meeting.

Jatti presented the State Budget for 1964-65 on 2-3-1964. No new taxes were proposed and the deficit was avoided. In fact, it showed a surplus of 7 lakh rupees. In the meanwhile, Wodeyar was transferred as Governor of Madras, and General S.M. Shrinagesh replaced him. The Government presented at last the promised White Paper on the Sharavati affair in the Assembly on 9-3-1964. It did not satisfy the critics. For instance, Annarao Ganamukhi, a political opponent of Nijalingappa in the Congress party, pointed out that even the paper itself showed that lot of money had been misappropriated and that the contractors seemed to run the Project ! The alliance of Government and the contractors had looted public money. Another critic, G. Duggappa, came down heavily on the Government and sarcastically referred to what he called CM's 'havali' (havoc) in his home district and said it was on the increase. A further charge made by Ganamukhi was that of favouritism. The Government had favoured one contractor, Ramaiah, by paying him 13 lakhs without justification, while refusing to pay other contractors, Boraiah and Basavaiah, under similar circumstances. Nijalingappa received support for his position on Sharavati from the Central Irrigation Minister, Dr. K.L. Rao. The Minister said that there was no need for an enquiry and claimed that the State Government had made a satisfactory examination of the charge of corruption.

A Forum calling itself Congress *Sadachara Samiti* published a critique of the Sharavati Project on 12-3-1964, focussing on the White Paper. The Forum pointed out that the

White Paper itself showed that serious irregularities and misappropriation of funds had occurred. Hence there was a need for judicial enquiry. The publication was released to the press by H.M. Channabasappa, acting as a spokesman for the Forum. All the dissidents opposed to Nijalingappa were present, and they included S.Chennaiah, Ganamukhi, Mali Mariyappa and A.G. Ramachandra Rao. C.J.Mukkannappa, an Independent member of the Assembly, repeated on 13-3-1964, his old charge that Old Mysore had been neglected by the Government and hence the present Mysore should be split into two States. Incidentally, this is currently voiced by the leaders from areas other than Old Mysore ! Nijalingappa's illness in March 1964 was raised as an issue by the opposition leader, Shivappa, in the Assembly on 17-3-1964. He referred to the CM's illness and demanded that until the CM got well alternative arrangement should be made by putting somebody in charge of CM's work. On 17-3-1964, Veerendra Patil refuted the allegation that injustice had been done to Old Mysore. Andanappa Doddameti, a Ekikarana leader from Bombay Karnataka, attacked Mukkannappa for talking about dividing the State. Echoing an earlier criticism of them by Nijalingappa, Jatti stated in the Vidhana Parishat that Irrigation Projects had not benefited the people while costing the Government crores of rupees. He was explaining why it was difficult to take up new Irrigation Projects. Obviously recovering from illness, Nijalingappa declared in the Assembly on 25-3-1964 that Almatti Dam would not be given up and urged those conducting satyagraha in its cause to give up their agitation. On 29-3-1964, Nijalingappa appealed to the people and the legislators to unite and assist in the building up of a prosperous Karnataka. He dubbed as madness the idea of splitting the State. Nijalingappa adopted a policy of positive co-operation with the neighbouring states, though he was prepared to pick up a row with them for

legitimate causes. The Mysore Government, for instance, supplied to Goa 50,000 Kilowatts of electricity from the Sharavati Project. The Lt. Governor of Goa, M.R. Sachdev, thanked Nijalingappa for it. As part of its policy of stepping up agricultural development, the Government decided to start an Agricultural University at Hebbal near Bangalore during the year.

Having failed to capture the party from their rival faction, the Congress dissident leaders did what was logical - they decided to leave the Congress for good and launch a new party. The press reported that the new party would be launched by Chennaiah, Subramanya and their friends in January or February 1965 in time for contesting in the Panchayat and Taluka Board elections. To this end, the dissident Congressmen were meeting in Bangalore soon. Their main grievance was that both Mysore Congress and Mysore Government were accessible only to Nijalingappa faction. They also planned to bring this to the notice of the party High Command, especially its President, Kamaraj. In accordance with his anti-corruption policy, Nijalingappa told the South Zonal Council meeting in Trivandrum on 12-5-1964 that he would soon set up a State Vigilance Commission on the lines of the National Vigilance Commission. It was yet another feather in the cap for Nijalingappa's Government that the construction of an all-weather port in Mangalore costing 15 crore and 42 lakh rupees was inaugurated by Kamaraj on 18-5-1964. An event of catastrophic dimension occurred on 27-5-1964 when Nehru who had been Prime Minister for seventeen years passed away in Delhi and passed into history. He took ill suddenly in the morning and death came at 2 P.M. Nehru's death became a litmus test for India's democracy and nation-hood. Sceptics went on asking, After Nehru, What? or who? Some feared and

some hoped abroad that the vacuum created by Nehru's departure might inaugurate an era of political instability. However, Indian liberal democratic political system, despite its proneness to crisis, had become mature enough and stabilised enough to weather the leadership crisis. Kamaraj Nadar played a key role in the selection of Nehru's successor, and Lal Bahadur Shastri became the second Prime Minister of India. Shastri was sworn in as Prime Minister on 9-6-1964. His Cabinet retained members from the earlier Cabinet but two new faces were added - Sanjeeva Reddy and Indira Gandhi. S.K. Patil who had left the Cabinet under Kamaraj plan was reinducted. The change at the Centre did not seem to have made any difference to Nijalingappa's relations with the Centre. If anything, it was perhaps more favourable than earlier, given Nijalingappa's problems with Nehru.

The State was up against a near famine condition in many parts. It requested the Centre to bail it out of the acute food shortage. In fact the Mysore Cabinet decided on 19.6.1964 to ask for a supply of 50,000 tons of rice and 50,000 tons of wheat. The financial crisis and food crisis were perhaps the toughest issues facing Nijalingappa's Government at this time. Nijalingappa announced in the Vidhana Parishat that Development surcharge tax on Irrigation Projects would soon come into force. The merchants were taking advantage of the food shortage by increasing the prices and by hoarding. Nijalingappa warned them that, if they did not play fair, the Government would not hesitate to take drastic action. Nijalingappa tried to give relief to the agricultural sections, and announced in the Assembly that surcharges would not be levied on land revenue, in view of the famine conditions. The Government followed up the warning given to merchants by drastic action. For instance, it cancelled the licence of merchants to distribute sugar if they misused the licence. Apart from these problems, Nijalingappa had to contend

with the routine problem of allegations hurled at his Government by Congress dissidents and non-Congress opponents. He reiterated in the Assembly on 15.7.1964 that the Sharavati Project was proceeding fast and no enquiry whether judicial or otherwise was needed. Ten members of Congress legislature party joined to make allegations of corruption, bribery and misuse of office against Nijalingappa and some of his colleagues. A list of 24 cases against them was submitted by them to the Congress president Kamaraj, Prime Minister Shastri and Home Minister Gulzarilal Nanda. They demanded an enquiry into the charges. Their demand was backed up by H.V.Kamat, leader of the Samyukta Samajwadi Party at a press conference in Bangalore on 23.7.1964. He declared that, if the State Government did not set up an enquiry committee into the Sharavati case, he would raise the issue in the Parliament. Kamat was surprised that Nijalingappa who set up an enquiry into Vidhana Soudha project costing just Rs. 2 crores, was reluctant to do so for a project costing 100 crores!. But Nijalingappa did not change his attitude to the question and, in fact, on 26.7.1964, told the press that he had made an enquiry into the allegations against him and some of his colleagues by ten legislators. Though he had yet to look into all the allegations, he claimed that the enquiry made so far had convinced him that they were baseless and politically motivated. A colleague of his, Krishnappa, denied specifically the allegations made against him.

The most troublesome issue confronting the Nijalingappa Government, was the issue of border disputes, especially with Mahārashtra. At the initiative of Maharashtra, a meeting was held in Delhi on 10.8.1964 between Home Minister Nanda, Nijalingappa and Maharashtra CM, V.P.Naik to discuss the border issue. The meeting lasted for some eight hours. After the meeting, Nijalingappa told the press that it was a useful

exercise as it enabled the parties to gain a better understanding of each other. Nanda said that he would report in detail the outcome to the Prime Minister. In the meanwhile, a law and order situation developed over the hike in college fees. Section 144 was imposed in various places to control the student agitation, including in Hubli-Dharwad and Government could not interfere in the matter. However, to enable the colleges to reduce the hike to some extent, the Government would increase its grants-in-aid to the colleges. He made this statement at a meeting of principals and members of management of private colleges in the Karnatak University area. As a result six students from that area who were sitting in *Anna-Satyagraha* (Hunger-strike), ended their fast on 28.8.1964 at 9 P.M. In fact, the press reported on 6.9.1964 that the college managements had reduced the fees. For Arts and Science, the annual fee was Rs.144 and for Commerce Rs.160, in the colleges in North Karnataka. Nijalingappa appealed to the students to end their strike and return to the classes.

In regard to the allegations against him and his colleagues, Nijalingappa was reported to have changed his position. Now he told the High Command that he was ready to face an enquiry into the allegations made by ten Congress legislators. The Parliamentary Board thought that such an enquiry would help the Government to work more smoothly. The procedure worked out by the High Command was that first the PM would examine the allegations, and, if he found them prima facie valid, then the Government would set up a commission of enquiry. In fact, this was the procedure innovated by the High Command in the case of corruption charges against the Punjab CM, Pratap Singh Kairon. Nijalingappa told the press that he would welcome the enquiry, and he said he himself was investigating into the matter to establish their innocence. However, he added that, personally,

he continued to feel that an enquiry was not needed as the allegations were trivial. He later told a press conference that he had not yet sent his reply to the charges made against him by the dissidents but would send it soon to the Home Ministry. Mixed up with the conflict between the dissidents and the CM, was more important the issue of the relationship between the party organization and the party Government. The MPCC had set up a *Samanvaya Samiti* or Co-ordination Committee to deal with the matter. At a meeting of this Committee attended by Nijalingappa, and a representative of the Parliamentary Board, it was decided on 11.11.1964 that the MPCC should be given full opportunity to advise the Government on important policy matters, their legislation and implementation. G.L. Nanda told the Rajya Sabha on 27.11.1964 that Nijalingappa had sent his reply to the allegations. C.R.Basappa, a Congress MP from Karnataka, declared in Delhi that he would resign his membership in the Parliament if the allegations against Nijalingappa were proved true. On 17.12.1964, a delegation of opposition legislators of Mysore led by S.Shivappa, called on President Radhakrishnan and submitted to him a petition alleging corruption, partisan attitude and administrative enquiry into the allegations. It was signed by 42 MLAs belonging to the opposition parties. Dissident leader Chennaiah stated on 26.12.1964 in Bangalore that the charges against Nijalingappa and his colleagues would be examined by a sub-committee of the Central cabinet and that this sub-committee had before it both the allegations and the replies to them.

Nijalingappa and the MPCC urged the Centre to help in the economic development of the State. The former asked in January 1965 the Centre to increase the railway facilities in the State and to include fifth steel plant for being set up in Mysore State. In an important frame-work shift, the Indian National Congress in its 69th session at Durgapur endorsed the

goals of agricultural development and rural development. In fact, this had been all along the basic framework of Nijalingappa who laid policy emphasis on agriculture and rural development. Along with dissidents and opposition members, now an All-India Organization, the All-India Anti-Corruption Parishat, began to urge that a judicial enquiry must be held into the allegations against Nijalingappa and his colleagues. Its Secretary, A.D.Mani, said in Bangalore that he did accept the argument that an enquiry into Sharavati at this stage would jeopardize the foreign aid to it. On 18.1.1965, the leader of the opposition, S.Shivappa, mounted in the Assembly an attack on Nijalingappa's Ministry, claiming that it had lost the confidence of the people and therefore it must resign and face elections. He was moving yet another no-confidence motion against the Government. Home Minister R.M.Patil counter-attacked the opposition by claiming that the SSP members were moving a no-confidence motion because they had failed to get ministerial berths. Nijalingappa informed the Assembly that he had sent his reply to the allegations, not as a CM but in his personal capacity. He once again repeated his view that the allegations were irresponsible and irrelevant, and hence did not deserve any enquiry. As could be only expected, the no-confidence motion was defeated on 21.1.1965 with 171 against and only 29 supporting it. It is testimony to Nijalingappa's political honesty and fair-mindedness that he told the House that it was not true that the SSP members approached him for ministerial berths. In the meanwhile, the State got a new Governor, V.V.Giri, who replaced General S.M. Shrinagesh.

Unaffected by the criticisms, the work on Sharavati progressed and the first stage of the electricity generation centre of Sharavati was inaugurated by K.L.Rao, the Central Minister. During the question hour on 27.1.1965, Nijalingappa told the Assembly that there were political forces against the construction of Mangalore port but his Government was

determined to go ahead with it. Speaking at a function on 31.1.1965, organised to celebrate his 62nd birth-day, Nijalingappa described himself as an humble servant of the Congress, and assured the people that he would work hard for the Congress and the Country as long as he had the strength to do so. Kamaraj presided over the function, and among the distinguished invitees, were Nijalingappa's friends Sanjeeva Reddy and Atulya Ghosh. Coming as they did from non-Hindi areas, Nijalingappa, Atulya Ghosh and Reddy warned that if Hindi was imposed on non-Hindi areas, it would endanger national unity.

One of the inconvenient legacies left behind by Gandhiji was prohibition, to which Congress was historically and traditionally committed. But it proved to be administratively and financially a very difficult ideal to implement. Nijalingappa, as much an idealist as a realist, and despite his deep commitment to Gandhism, told the Assembly on 1.2.1965 that the time had come to review the prohibition policy in the light of Tekchand Committee Report on Prohibition. In the same vein of political realism, he advised the Centre to go slow on the Hindi question and maintain the status quo for at least fifteen years with regard to the issues of writing the UPSC examinations in Hindi and carrying on correspondence with the Centre in Hindi.

On 22.2.1965, Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri told the Lok Sabha that the Cabinet had examined the allegations against Nijalingappa and his colleagues and found that there was no need for any enquiry by the Centre. With the issue on corruption and bribery in the Sharavati Project having been temporarily resolved to Nijalingappa's advantage, attention now turned to more positive and constructive aspects of the Project. The Mysore Government asked the Centre to bear the total cost of the Project, but the Central minister conerned, K.L.Rao, told

the Lok Sabha this was not acceptable to the Centre. The MPs from Mysore, R.G.Dubey and C.R.Basappa, argued that the Project was done at a very low cost, that it would benefit other states, and hence the Centre should bear all the cost. K.L.Rao conceded that it was an economically managed Project but the Centre had no intention of taking over the Project. He said already 50 crore rupees had been spent and the remaining 20 crore rupees should be the responsibility of the State. Actually, the cost had jumped from the original estimate of 22 crores to fifty crores. The State was keen on more Central assistance to its irrigation needs. Presiding over the Ryots' Parishat in Nargund, Nijalingappa said that Mysore State had only 6 p.c. of the potential irrigation available and hence the Centre should assist it in increasing its irrigation facilities.

Another issue relating to border question that was tackled by Nijalingappa and his Government was the issue of Goa's merger with Maharashtra. Not only the Government, it was agitated by the people of Mysore in general. Mysore Legislative Council passed a resolution on 13.3.1965, condemning the idea of merging Goa with Maharashtra. It characterised Maharashtra's demand for merger a political sin. Earlier, on 12.3.1965, the opposition members in Goa Assembly thanked Nijalingappa for opposing the merger. On 15.3.1965, Mysore Assembly passed a resolution demanding that the status quo in Goa should be maintained for 10 years or, if there was to be a merger, it should be with Mysore which had better claims. When the State and its Government were facing many difficult issues, the dissidents were busy with their future plans. On 26.4.1965, it was reported, that the dissident Congressmen planned to hold a conference to work out a programme for future action. They were unhappy with the decision of the Cabinet sub-committee to give a clean chit to Nijalingappa over the allegations against him and his

colleagues. The opposition leaders staged the first ever food Satyagraha in the Assembly on 9-4-1965 even while in session, against the increase in land revenue. It was reported that within the ruling party itself there were differences of opinion on the issue. On 28-4-1965, the Congress dissident leaders decided to float a new party with the aim of giving the State an honest, transparent and efficient administration. The meeting included besides Congress dissidents a few from the opposition parties and a few Independents. T. Subramanya played a key role in the conference. It was also attended by the Kerala Congress leader K.M.George as an observer with five of his colleagues. As a sequel, Mysore State Citizen's Political Conference met in Bangalore on 29-4-1965 to set up a sub-committee to settle the questions of the flag, name and goals of the new party. The sub-committee comprised S.Chennaiah, T.Subramanya, and Annarao Ganamukhi. It was authorised to co-opt four more members to make it more representative.

The recent history of wars with Pakistan and China, whether declared or undeclared, had made the nation defence-conscious. It was no surprise that a Chief Ministers' Defence Committee had been set up at the national level to tackle defence problems. Nijalingappa attended a meeting of the Committee, and, on his return on 8-5-1965, he told the press in Bangalore that the country should not depend on foreign countries for the supply of defence equipment and armaments. He refused to comment on the new party, the Janata Paksha, floated by his political opponents, but said that he had only read about it in the papers. One of the problems facing an Indian state is the problem of migration from other states. Though India has no dual citizenship, a political equivalent to it in the name of the "sons of the soil" has grown over the years. Mysore is among the states with a very high proportion of linguistic minorities.

Nijalingappa, following the tradition of generosity developed in Mysore, welcomed outsiders to come to the State, and even maintain their identity, provided they contributed to the prosperity of the State. It is significant that he did this while addressing the 45th Kannada Sahitya Sammelana in Karwar on 10-5-1965. Nijalingappa said the State had to face problems due to financial constraints at the Centre. Addressing the State Development Council, he said that the Third Plan achievements were below the expected level because of a severe financial constraint. Yet he had no option but to go to the Centre for assistance. He disclosed that he had suggested to the Prime Minister to set up four steel plants, one each in Mysore, Goa, Andhra and Madras, so that inter-state squabbles over developmental resources could be minimised. In Mysore state, he said Hospet was the best site for the steel plant. On 20-6-1965, the second stage of the Sharavati Project was inaugurated by Nijalingappa, and in his speech he assured the people that the Kali project would be included in the Fourth Plan. Releasing information to the press on the Fifth Plan for the State, Nijalingappa said that it was a modest 500 crore rupees plan. Though Mysore had abundant raw material, its industrial development was slow. For instance, it had great irrigation potentialities but its cultivated land was very small. But he claimed that his Government was now creating conditions favourable to development. The fifth steel plant had become embroiled in inter-state conflict, especially between Mysore and Andhra. The Anglo-American expert team in its report recommended Visakhapatnam in Andhra as the proper site for it. There were rumours of manipulation in the report to change the original choice of Hospet to Visakhapatnam. It certainly took Nijalingappa by surprise and he continued to think of Hospet as the best site. He told the press that the State would start a steel plant in Hospet if Centre gave its clearance. The Central

Steel Minister, Sanjeeva Reddy said in Hyderabad that, though Fourth Plan had provision for only one steel plant, it did not follow that others could not be started. Hence Mysore and Madras did not need to worry about Andhra getting the plant. On 6-7-1965, a hartal was observed in Hospet in protest against its being denied the fifth steel plant.

Mysore was worried and surprised that the Parliamentary Board under pressure from Maharashtra had changed its earlier stand on Goa merger that the issue should not be opened for ten years, and was prepared to reopen it. It shocked the Goan opposition leader, Dr. Sequera. Mysore opposed strongly the Centre's decision to discuss merger with Bandodkar. It was reported in the press that the Nijalingappa Ministry was ready even to resign over this issue. Minister Hegde formally told the Prime Minister that Mysore was against the decision to open the issue of Goa merger now, and the PM told him that the Parliamentary Board had yet to take a final decision. Hegde was assured by the PM that he would make a thorough study of the question. What was puzzling was the revelation by Nijalingappa that the Centre had not consulted even Maharashtra CM about it, let alone him. It was also surprising that the President of Goa Congress, Purushottam Kakodkar, had also not been consulted. Nijalingappa who made this revelation at a meeting of Congress workers in Hubli, scotched the propaganda against him that he had agreed to a referendum on the issue.

On the anti- Nijalingappa front, the new Janata Paksha held a meeting in Hubli on 31-7-1965, and elected S. Chennaiah as its first President. It also elected an Executive of 17 members which included all the key dissidents in the anti- Nijalingappa camp such as Subramanya, A.G.Ramachandra Rao, N.Rachaiah

and Bandi Gowda. Hanumanthaiah, still sitting on the fence, was the outstanding omission. A sharp policy shift was announced on 4-8-1965 when Nijalingappa's Government announced relaxation in prohibition policy, as a result of which anyone could get a permit to consume a fixed quantity of liquor (foreign). The Government issued licences to start liquor shops throughout the State. Predictably, old-timers like Hallikeri called the new policy unfortunate. Perhaps this had to do with the financial shortage faced by the Government. Hegde said that the Fourth Plan had run into trouble and the money available for 1966-67 was only 47 crores, and not much money could be expected from the Centre. For instance, the State had asked the Centre for 10 crore rupees to tide over the food crisis but could scratch only one crore. Undaunted, the State Government claimed to have a scheme ready by which the State would attain self-sufficiency in food in two years ! The first political casualty of the relaxation of prohibition was Yashodhara Dasappa who resigned from the Ministry on 27-12-1965 opposing the change in policy. The question of prohibition precipitated a crisis in the party and the President of the MPCC, Mohammed Ali, told the press that the MPCC would meet soon to discuss the Government's new policy on prohibition.

Another calamity befell on the nation when Lal Bahadur Shastri, the Prime Minister, died in Tashkent on 11-1-1966 at 1.02 A.M, and thus the new year began with a disaster. The country seems to have passed the second test of leadership choice, as G.L. Nanda was appointed again as the country's stop-gap Prime Minister for the second time in less than two years. Back in Mysore State, the prohibition policy was attacked by the opposition parties as well, especially the Jan Sangh, whose leader, Jagannath Rao Joshi, accused the Congress of lack of principles. At the national level, the contest for PM's

position narrowed down to one between Indira Gandhi and Morarji Desai. Nijalingappa who was to regret his action most bitterly later, supported Indira Gandhi. He explained why he backed her on 18-1-1966 during the election to the PM's position. He was talking to the MPs from Mysore. They considered Nanda, Chavan and Kamaraj, but finally the CMs plumped for Indira Gandhi. Hanumanthaiah, an MP from Mysore asked, why not a third person chosen if Morarji was not acceptable and Indira Gandhi was not regarded as the best. Some Mysore MPs felt that experienced Morarji would have been better than inexperienced Indira to face the country's critical challenges. But even they accepted the choice of Indira Gandhi but did not specify the reasons behind their choice. This inside story was revealed by Hanumanthaiah. Only half the MPs from Mysore attended the meeting and the rest were out of station. Nijalingappa said that all the MPs backed Indira on 18-1-1966 excepting one but he did not name the person. But it is reasonable to speculate that this could have been Hanumanthaiah. On 19-1-1966, Indira Gandhi was elected as the third Prime Minister of India, polling 335 votes against Morarji's 196. The Congress legislature party met to elect its leader on 19-1-1966 at 11.05 A.M. with Kamaraj Nadar in the chair. G.L. Nanda proposed Indira Gandhi's name and Sanjeeva Reddy seconded it. Hanumanthaiah proposed Morarji's name and it was seconded by Tikarama Paliwal. Both contestants did not cast their votes. Two votes were invalid, and 526 out of the total of 551 MPs were present. Indira Gandhi was technically qualified as she was a member of the Rajya Sabha, but she felt that political norms required that the PM should be a member of the Lok Sabha. After her election, Kamaraj told the press that she would prove to be an excellent administrator, and that her policy would be the policy of the Congress party. This meant ideologically centrist, neither right

nor left. Hanumanthaiah apparently not happy with the situation, told the press in Chandigarh on 21-1-1966 that powerful vested interests in the Congress Party suppressed all democratic dissent.

Indira Gandhi retained in her Ministry most of the members from Shastri's Government but added three new faces - Ashok Mehta, G.S. Pathak and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. Only two from the old Ministry were dropped, and they were A.K. Sen and Humayun Kabir. Jagjivan Ram hesitated in the beginning but later accepted the invitation to join the Cabinet. Nijalingappa's relationship with the new regime at the Centre had a cordial and unproblematic beginning. "**In fact, he was one of the senior leaders of the party, who orchestrated Indira Gandhi's rise to Prime Ministership.**" For now, his problems in the domain of political management were confined to his home base - his opponents within and without the party. During the discussion on Governor's address in the State Assembly, C.J. Mukkannappa, an Independent member, gave a good description of the CM's plight vis-a-vis his own contingent. Mukkannappa asserted that the Ministry did not have any harmony. The Ministers were out for each other's blood, that they wasted time in empty speeches, and that their contribution to the progress of the State was zero! He pointed out that the food situation and the financial condition of the State were in a bad shape. On the controversial prohibition policy, Nijalingappa told the press that no further relaxation would be made for now and the existing policy would continue. He refused to say if and when a second stage of relaxation would be implemented. Finance and Excise Minister, Hegde, assured there would be no second stage for the time being. One of the noteworthy features of Nijalingappa's Government was its flexibility in blending idealism with realism, its ability to recognise the realistic limits of ideals. For instance, in spite of its commitment to co-operatives, it was prepared

to give it up if the ground realities warranted it. Nijalingappa, for instance, was prepared to hand over lift irrigation projects direct to government control because the co-operatives were not found helpful. Hegde presented the State Budget for 1966-67 on 2-3-1966 and levied no new taxes.

Nijalingappa's strongest policy commitment was undoubtedly to irrigation and agriculture. But he was handicapped by inadequate financial resources. He wrote to the PM and K.L. Rao to take over the Krishna Project as a Central Project because the State had no financial resources to carry it out on its own. He also demanded three crore rupees for other irrigation projects. He felt that people had the wrong impression that Mysore was a prosperous State, when they visited Bangalore and Mysore cities and the areas immediately surrounding them. But, in fact, it was a poor State and 1966 was the worst year for it in the last fifty years. He was forced to go to the Centre constantly with a begging bowl ! On 10-3-1966, Nijalingappa was in Delhi to meet the PM and Ashok Mehta to urge the Centre to pay greater attention to the irrigation needs of the State. In particular he tried to persuade the Centre to take charge of the 100-crore Upper Krishna Project. On 6-4-1966, Ashok Mehta, Vice-Chairman of the Planning Commission, addressed the Assembly in Bangalore and said that the plight of Mysore under the Third Plan was not encouraging. He admitted that the Central aid had been less than promised. In fact, it was a third of the promised 90 crore rupees.

With crucial developmental issues at stake, the country's energy and time were getting frittered away in futile territorial disputes between states. The Maharashtra Government tried to step up its demands on the border dispute issue. Apparently, it was able to pressurise the Centre and it did. Indira Gandhi

stated in Aurangabad on 6-5-1966 that a high-level Committee would be set up by the AICC to go into the border dispute between Mysore and Maharashtra. Nijalingappa said in reaction that he would oppose the idea of a Committee or Commission if it was meant only for Mysore-Maharashtra dispute. However, he would not mind if it was assigned a comprehensive coverage of all border disputes. He also added that there could only be marginal accommodations but no major changes. For instance, he was agreeable to the exchanges of a limited number of villages on linguistic grounds. He welcomed, however, Indira Gandhi's statement that Goa's future should be settled by Goans themselves. In Karnataka, the opposition to the proposed new Commission on Mysore-Maharashtra border dispute escalated. The President of the Ekikarana Samiti declared in Hubli that they opposed the idea. Maharashtra's obsession with the issue even irritated Indira Gandhi. She assured a delegation of MPs from Mysore that the proposed Commission would take up all border disputes. The Congress President, Kamaraj, told a delegation of Mysore MPs that no Commission on border disputes would be set up before the coming General Elections in 1967. In the meanwhile, the Election Commission decided provisionally to schedule the third General Elections in February 1967 and make it a one-day affair.

Nijalingappa's standing and reputation within the party was as high as ever, and it was not surprising that in Bombay AICC meeting, 18 members issued a signed statement urging that Nijalingappa should be considered for one of the five places in the Parliamentary Board. They said that Nijalingappa's sacrifices, selfless service and vast experience entitled him to it. There was a big scramble for the election to the Parliamentary Board with twelve senior leaders in the field, including Sanjeeva Reddy, Sanjivayya, C.B.Gupta, Hanumanthaiah and others.

Nijalingappa kept away from it on Kamaraj's advice. Kamaraj had explained that the South could get only one place, and, if both Reddy and Nijalingappa contested both might be defeated. Kamaraj wanted Nijalingappa to contest but Reddy refused to withdraw. During the 3-day AICC meeting in Bombay, Indira Gandhi, Nijalingappa and Kamaraj discussed the border disputes. The Mysore Cabinet in its meeting on 24-5-1966, felt that the one-man commission proposed by the Congress Working Committee to settle Mysore-Maharashtra and Mysore-Kerala border disputes was not to be rejected out of hand. The MPCC, however, rejected it and a senior Congress leader, Hallikeri, opposed it. Nijalingappa told the Belgaum District Congress Committee that the final decision was not yet taken about the scope of the Commission.

The idea of the Commission was greeted with violent opposition throughout Mysore State. Nijalingappa told the press that the Commission would not be set up before the General Elections, as far as he knew. But such statements did little to cool the passions aroused over the question in the State. A Youth Conference in Malleswaram in Bangalore, held on 29-5-1966, criticised the state leadership as a sell-out on the border issue. It was presided over by K.L. Ramakrishna and it was organised by C. Puttaswami. At a meeting of the Belgaum DCC held on 2-6-1966, the fire-brand poet Wali Channappa said that Nijalingappa should resign from his Chief Ministership on the issue and lead the agitation against the proposed Commission. He was the right man to do so as he had played a key role in the Ekikarana movement. Belgaum DCC appointed a committee under Wali Channappa to organise the agitation against the Commission. The satyagraha was to commence on 10-6-1966. As for Nijalingappa himself, presiding over a function to celebrate Hallikeri's 60th birthday on 7-6-1966 at

Ravindra Kalakshetra, Bangalore, he declared that he was against the Commission being set up before the General Elections. But if this was done and its recommendations favoured Maharashtra, he would totally oppose it and lead an agitation against it. He reiterated his position that nothing more than marginal adjustments were acceptable to him and that he would categorically reject any recommendations affecting the status quo of Belgaum, Karwar, Nippani and other big towns.

On 8-6-1966, the Congress leaders from Belgaum told the press that they were not satisfied with Nijalingappa's stand which he had been repeating for a long time now without any effect on the Centre. The Commission was being set up inspite of his statements. They feared that the Commission might give away big towns to Maharashtra. Their satyagraha would continue until the Centre withdrew the proposal to set up the Commission. The agitation formally started at Suldhal railway station, significantly enough at a place already made famous during the Gandhian struggle. H.V. Kaujalgi, an MP in the Lok Sabha from South Belgaum, resigned his membership in protest against the Commission. On 10-6-1966, some 126 satyagrahis were arrested and the Poona-Bangalore Express train was obstructed. The agitation escalated as it spread to Gokak on 11th and to Raibag on 12th. Soon most of North Karnataka was on fire. To clear the misconception that the agitation was aimed against any leader, Wali Channappa told a meeting of Satygrahis in Belgaum that it was certainly not against Nijalingappa whom they considered the leader of this very agitation. The official State Congress was in a dilemma over the agitation. MPCC President, Mohammed Ali, declared in Delhi on 22-6-1966 that the current agitation in the State had nothing to do with the MPCC ! He conceded that it was the work of a few DCCs. The growing agitation must have had

some impact on Delhi, and the Prime Minister and the Congress President Kamaraj said they were willing to re-examine the issue of one-man Commission. They were responding to the meeting they had with a delegation of MPCC. The MPCC convened a special meeting to discuss the question on 25-6-1966 in Bangalore. The agitation reached a violent stage by the end of June 1966, and the police opened fire in Harihar and Davanagere on 27-6-1966 to control the mob. In Harihar firing, a boy named Prakash was killed. On 28-6-1966, Nijalingappa appealed to the satygrahis to stop their agitation as by then the Centre had realised what the people of Karnataka wanted. He would present the case of Karnataka at the Congress Working Committee meeting scheduled for 5-7-1966. A special delegation of Mysore Congressmen met the Prime Minister a day before the meeting of the Congress Working Committee on 4-7-1966 to present the case of Mysore. It comprised Jatti, Hallikeri, Appanna Gowda (President of Belgaum DCC) and Kollur Mallappa (Vice President of the MPCC). A day before this, Nijalingappa appealed to the agitators to stop their agitation as the Congress Working Committee would re-examine the case. The Congress Working Committee meeting on 5-7-1966 passed on the problem to the CMs of Mysore and Maharashtra. It asked them to settle the scope of the proposed Commission in two months. It said further that if the CMS did not reach an agreement, the issue would come back to the Working Committee for further action. Chavan objected to this position on the ground that it meant the Working Committee was going back on its earlier promise. The Akhila Kannadigara Sammelana in Hubli on 12.7.1966 opposed the very idea of a Commission. Amidst all this bustle, elections were held in Davanagere on 17.7.1966 to elect members to the MPCC. As usual, Nijalingappa group and anti-Nijalingappa group were expected to fight for the seven places. In the elections, all the 7 places

were bagged by Nijalingappa group in the first round. The dissident leader Kollur Mallappa claimed that the elections were not properly conducted. The coming General Elections occupied the attention of the MPCC. Nijalingappa told the press that the selection of candidates would be impartial and on merit. He assured that groupism would be avoided. H.K.Veeranna Gowda alleged that influence and misuse of office played a role in the Davanagere party elections. In the Assembly, the non-Congress members opposed the very idea of a Commission for border dispute between Mysore and Maharashtra. Nijalingappa reiterated his stand that only marginal adjustments were acceptable and thus the status of the bigger towns like Karwar, Belgaum and Nippani was absolutely non-negotiable. Among Nijalingappa's traditional supporters, Hallikeri and Doddameti, opposed the very idea of a Commission.

On 7.8.1966, the CMs of Mysore and Maharashtra met in Bangalore to discuss the scope of the proposed Commission. They told the press later that the meeting was useful in enabling them to understand the position of each other better and appreciate their difficulties at home. At this time a small incident occurred which throws light on Nijalingappa's natural humility. He condemned the idea of erecting a bronze statue of him as madness and stupidity, as he was still alive. He asked the sponsorors of the idea not to go ahead with it! The second round of talks between Nijalingappa and V.P.Naik in Nagpur on 5.9.1966 also ended in a stale-mate. The third scheduled for 10.9.1966 was cancelled because Nijalingappa had taken ill suddenly and was medically advised to take rest for four to five days. The two gave up the talks as unproductive by 24.9.1966. The matter now bounced back to the Working Committee. It took a unilateral decision to urge the Centre to appoint the one-man Commission to go into the border disputes

between Mysore and Maharashtra and Mysore and Kerala. It was left to the Commission itself to determine its scope after consultation with the parties concerned. The Centre announced on 17.10.1966 that Justice Meherchand Mahajan would constitute the one-man Commission on border disputes. Both the Chief Ministers welcomed the appointment. In the Lok Sabha, Hanumanthaiah said that the Centre had been a victim of Maharashtrian pressure in regard to the change in its earlier stand. He was participating in the debate on Goa merger. He accused the Centre of abandoning the principle of justice and fair-play because the move for merger was essentially a Maharashtrian move and did not come from the people of Goa. He wanted that care should be taken to see that voters list should not be tampered with during the referendum on merger. In particular, Bandodkar should not be allowed to interfere in the preparation of the voters list. On 1.12.1966, the Lok Sabha gave consent to the holding of a referendum in Goa on the merger issue. On 3.12.1966, the President of India accepted Bandodkar's resignation and the Goa legislature was dissolved under a Presidential order. These acts were a prelude to the referendum. The Chief Election Commissioner said that the referendum should be held in mid-January 1967.

The Central Law Minister Pathak announced in the Lok Sabha that the General Elections would be held from 15 February to 21 February 1967. Nijalingappa who turned 65 on 10.12.1966 declared his intention to stand for the election from his old constituency of Bagalkot. It was during Nijalingappā's Chief Ministership that Karnataka got another University, namely Bangalore University. Inaugurating it on 10.12.1966, he suggested that it should be a Central University, a suggestion never implemented. He gave the people of the State a characteristic birthday message on his 65th birthday. He said

that the country should work harder and that was the key to economic development. He said further about himself, "I was born ordinary, grew ordinary and have been living in an ordinary manner!" His wish was to live long so that he could serve the nation and society better. He referred to what he called a secret of his life, which was that, before going to bed every night, he read poetry! As the elections were round the corner, the State and its political parties got busy with pre-election activities. On 12.12.1966, the MPCC published its list of candidates for the Assembly and Lok Sabha seats. It contained many new faces, and some old-timers were denied tickets. For instance, for the Lok Sabha, S.V.Krishnamurthy Rao, and Sarojini Mahishi were not given tickets while Dr.Nagappa Alva did not get the Assembly ticket. However, the list was incomplete as it did not finalise the candidates for 25 constituencies. Releasing the list, Nijalingappa addressed a press conference on behalf of the MPCC President Mohammed Ali. He said that more than half of the candidates were new-comers. An important feature of the selection was the predominance of youth. Elections were exciting occasions but they could not displace the developmental activities in the State. The third stage of Sharavati Project was scheduled to commence during the last week of December 1966 or first week of January 1967, and the fourth stage was expected to kick off two months later. On the election front, the Central Parliamentary Board over-ruled the State Congress and gave Sarojini Mahishi the ticket for North Dharwad constituency.

In December 1966 almost at the end of his third term as CM, Nijalingappa made use of public occasions to express his developmental and economic ideology. For instance, addressing the naming ceremony of a College in Nippani on 18.12.1966, he asserted that the individual should be given a primary place

in developmental schemes and that the key to societal development was individual development. On 2.1.1967, addressing industrialists, he said that he welcomed outside industrialists and would provide them with facilities in Mysore. While his personal commitment seems to be to a strong liberal economic philosophy, he was bound as a Congressman to the party's frame-work of a mixed economy in which the State and market complemented each other in the process of economic development. He was also committed to a balanced development between agriculture and industry. Realising that the induction of outside industrialists posed a problem for the idea of linguistic states with their tendency to focus inward, Nijalingappa confessed to his audience of industrialists in Bombay that he was himself a staunch supporter of linguistic states and yet he thought that time had now come to reconsider the earlier commitment to it. He was critical of the linguistic states because of their undesirable by-products such as petty and futile inter-state squabbles. He was against the obsession with the idea of the 'sons of the soil' and its exclusiveness. He declared that India was one and that its resources belonged to all Indians irrespective of their state affiliations.

The referendum on the issue of merger of Goa was held on 16-1-1967 and the percentage of voting was as high as 80. Even before the final result was in, by 18-1-1967 it became clear that the mergerists had lost and its proponent, the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak party conceded defeat. The final result was against merger 1,72,291, and for merger, 1,38,170 votes. Nijalingappa and Karnataka heaved a sigh of relief at the defeat of mergerists. Nijalingappa welcomed the result but said that Karnataka had given only moral support to the anti-mergerists. In the meanwhile, in the General Elections in the State, the Congress won the majority but it fared worse than

in the 1962 elections. Nijalingappa himself was elected unopposed from Shiggaon in Dharwad district. He had also submitted nominations from three other constituencies - Bagalkot, Hadagali and Raibag. Out of a total of 204 seats, Congress bagged 124 seats. Its nearest rival, the PSP got only 20, and the next best was the Swatantra party with 18 seats. The dissident party, the Janata, got only 9. The Jan Sangh improved its position marginally with 4 seats. The SSP got 6, and the MES 5 seats. The CPM drew a blank while the CPI got 1 seat. The Independents accounted for as many as 30 seats. On 24-2-1967, Nijalingappa issued a press statement to thank the people for voting Congress to power for another five years. He hoped that the State's problems would be solved in this period. He attributed the defeats of the Congress to internal quarrels and said that it should be seen as a warning against internal disharmony, indiscipline and non-commitment to the party. In the Lok Sabha also, the party fared worse than previously but got a comfortable majority of 18 out of 27. At the national level, the Congress had a narrow majority, nowhere near to its previous achievement.

Nijalingappa was elected leader of the Congress legislature party unanimously, for the 4th time on 2-3-1967, and he announced his Ministry on 12-3-1967. It had 14 Ministers and 8 Deputy Ministers. S.R. Kanthi, B.D. Jatti, M.V. Rama Rao, R.M.Patil, Veerendra Patil, B. Rachaiah, Ramakrishna Hegde, K.Puttaswamy, D.Devaraj Urs, C.Narayana Gowda, Mohammed Ali, K.V. Shankara Gowda and P.M.Nadgouda - were inducted. The absentees from the old team were M.V.Krishnappa who had been elected to Lok Sabha, Dr. Nagappa Alva who had been defeated, K. Mallappa who had passed away, and Yashodhara Dasappa who had resigned. The Deputy Ministers were Y. Ramakrishna, Dayananda Sagar, Abdul Gaffar,

A.P.Appanna, D.B.Pawar, H.C. Boraiah, G.B. Shankar Rao and Alur Hanumantappa. Hanumanthaiah moved to the national stage by becoming the Chairman of the Administrative Reforms Commission in the place of Morarji Desai. In his Budget presented on 24-3-1967, Hegde announced a further relaxation of prohibition, which was expected to yield an income of 4 crore rupees. The revenue system in the present form was abolished involving a loss to the tune of 6 to 7 crores. The overall deficit was of the order of 2 crore rupees. A new Governor, G.S. Pathak, was appointed for the State.

Mysore leaders urged the Mahajan Commission to continue the status quo. There was quite a mini-crisis when the Assembly was prorogued on 2-5-1967 and the subsequent explanation of the CM as to why this was done. For three days from 2-5-1967, the proceedings of the Assembly were disrupted and it came to a virtual halt. On 5-5-1967, K.H. Patil of Janata Paksha mounted a severe criticism against Nijalingappa and said that he had not told the House the truth about the incident of the 2nd. He demanded from the Government a statement on the economic plight of the State. The following day the opposition alleged in the Assembly that the postponement of the session was not due to the economic crisis facing the State as claimed by Nijalingappa, but due to the internal conflicts within the ruling party. That there was some serious financial crisis in the State seems beyond doubt. Hegde told the House on 26-6-1967 that the Budget he presented earlier in May was a temporary one but now that the Centre had given two crores more, which involved a slight change in the budget. Nijalingappa had made a long statement on 2-5-1967 on the financial crisis. He had then said, "... As we all know Mysore has to face a lot of difficulties. I have been discussing with the Central Government and the Planning Commission that regard being had

to the peculiar situation in Mysore, more help should come to us ... They say they cannot find money. My own fear is that there may be further cuts ... I do not know where we stand. I am very anxious as to how to cut our coat according to the cloth. We do not know what sort of coat and cloth we have... Supposing we get less amount, how are we to adjust priorities? I feel strongly that the highest priorities should be given to agriculture and irrigation, and next, to power..... It is only for four months that the budget had been passed and that they can spend ... it may be possible that we may not have much for spending for the rest of eight months .... I am not very much anxious to continue my leadership. It has not been one of my attractions in life ... " The grave financial and economic situation in the State prompted the Government to reduce its expenditure by cancelling some posts and not filling others. There was to be a 5 % cut in the posts of senior assistants, junior assistants and fourth grade employees. There was some commotion in the Assembly when a former SSP member who had crossed the floor to join the Congress, praised the policies of the Government which contradicted his own criticism of the Government when in opposition ! The member concerned was Basavanneppa. The opposition continued to use every opportunity to attack the Government. For instance, on 1-8-1967 S. Gopala Gowda raised the issue of breach of privilege against Nijalingappa over a statement alleged to have been made by him in Delhi that 12 MLAs from the opposition would cross over to the Congress and bring up its strength to 140 in the Assembly. Again on 8-8-1967, the opposition took the Government to task for proposing to hike the remuneration of the legislators at a time of economic crisis. They dubbed it anti-people. Obviously, the financial crisis must have become acute and the Government announced on 23-8-1967 that prohibition would be totally abolished from 1-9-1967.

In the meanwhile, Nijalingappa declared on 30-9-1967 that the Mahajan Commission report must be accepted by all concerned and thus put an end to the border dispute between Mysore and Maharashtra. He conceded that Mysore did not get fully what it wanted but, in the interest of inter-state amity, he was accepting the report. Of course, the report largely vindicated Mysore's stand. It rejected the Pataskar formula of village as a unit, and rejected Maharashtra's claim to Belgaum, Karwar and other towns. It also rejected Maharashtrian position on the status of Konkani language. It suggested that the unit should be not one village but a cluster of villages. But Maharashtra CM, V.P. Naik, rejected the report on 18-10-1967. The Congress President Kamaraj declared on 10-11-1967 that both the parties were bound by the Mahajan Report. He expressed surprise that Maharashtra CM was encouraging opposition to the report.

Towards the close of November 1967, activities picked up over the choice of a candidate for the Presidentship of the Congress, to succeed Kamaraj. As a senior leader of the party, it was inevitable that Nijalingappa was called upon to play a role in the choice of the next president. On 17-11-1967, Nijalingappa said in Bangalore that Indira Gandhi herself was not keen on the position. Suddenly there were rumours in the capital that Nijalingappa himself was being pressurised to accept the post. A New Delhi report of 26-11-1967 claimed that he was universally acceptable. But it also reported that Nijalingappa was not keen on it as he was engaged in the important task of developing his own State. On 30-11-1967, Hanumanthaiah filed his nomination for the post of Congress President. Other prospective candidates mentioned were S.K.Patil and Mohan Dharia. On 1-12-1967, it was reported from Delhi that Kamaraj had persuaded Nijalingappa to be his

successor, and that Indira Gandhi was agreeable to it. The press carried the inside story of how Nijalingappa was made to accept the Presidentship. On the night of 30-12-1967, Nijalingappa was pressed to take up the job but he was in dilemma. At a meeting held at PM's residence on that night, there were present all the big guns of the party besides Indira Gandhi and Nijalingappa. Others were S.K. Patil, Brahmananda Reddy, Jagjivan Ram, Satyanarayan Sinha, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Dinesh Singh and V.B. Raju. Kamaraj was absent as he did not seem to have been told about the meeting. However, at mid-night he was called for. It seems the decisive influence on Nijalingappa in his agreeing to be President were Indira Gandhi and S.K. Patil. But Nijalingappa himself, in a personal discussion with this biographer, stated that the decisive influence was that of his good friend Kamaraj. Anyway, the press story was that Kamaraj did not force Nijalingappa because he respected his decision not to quit Mysore political scene as that would create problems in the State. The alternative was to allow Nijalingappa to hold simultaneously the Chief Ministership and Congress Presidentship, a prospect which Kamaraj disapproved. After Kamaraj's failure, it was Indira Gandhi and Patil who made him accept the post.

On 2-12-1967, Nijalingappa told a press conference in Belgaum that as Congress President he would work hard to improve the plight of the common man. Later he explained that he accepted the Presidentship of the Congress because otherwise there would have been a contest. He assured that his successor in Mysore would be unanimously elected. On 7-12-1967, Nijalingappa's election as President of the Congress was formally proclaimed by Sadiq Ali, the Election Officer of the AICC. The 71st Session of the Indian National Congress was held at Lal Bahadur Nagar in Hyderabad and it opened on

10-1-1968. Presiding over it, Nijalingappa said that the Congress alone could take the country forward. Later he declared that the Congress needed to be re-vitalised. On 18-1-1968, Nijalingappa announced his Working Committee. He nominated to it Indira Gandhi, Jagjivan Ram, Morarji Desai, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Umashankar Dixit, Shankar Dayal Sharma, Chavan, K.P.Abraham, S.K. Patil, Atulya Ghosh and M.V. Rama Rao.

Back home in Bangalore, a storm was brewing over the Hindi question. On 23-1-1968, the anti-Hindi agitation by students in Bangalore took a violent turn and the police resorted to firing, which led to two deaths. Now, Nijalingappa was riding two horses. On the national front, as Congress President he followed up his suggestion of re-vitalising the Congress by appointing on 30-1-1968 a Committee of seven to carry out the task of re-vitalising the Organization. Its members were S.K. Patil, C. Subramaniam, Kamalapati Tripathi, T.O. Bawa, S.N. Mishra, Sharatchandra Sinha, and T. Manyan. M.V. Rama Rao was appointed as the first Secretary General of the Congress. Answering the objections to his holding a dual charge, Nijalingappa told the Assembly on 21-2-1968 that there was no constitutional bar on his holding two positions. However, he told the press on 15-3-1968 that he would resign from his Chief Ministership when he felt that the situation in the State was satisfactory. In the meanwhile, a press report from Delhi said that pressure might be brought on Nijalingappa to give up his CM's position. Nijalingappa told the press that if he was not wanted he would give up the Congress Presidentship. He did not make it clear whether this implied that he would not give up his other position. Another press report said that Nijalingappa had said that his people wanted him to continue as CM and that he found it difficult to resign from CM's post. But on 12-4-1968, Nijalingappa indicated that he would resign

from the CM's position. He made a statement to this effect while laying down the foundation for an amateur drama association in Bangalore. On 17-4-1968, he told the Assembly that he would resign from his position as CM. He said in Bangalore on 30-4-1968 that his successor would be elected before 25-5-1968. On 13-5-1968 at long last, Nijalingappa resigned from the leadership of the State Congress legislature party and Chief Ministership. On 23-5-1968, Veerendra Patil was unanimously elected as leader of the Congress legislature party and took over from Nijalingappa as his successor. Nijalingappa must have felt satisfied that his successor was a man he had first picked up and groomed as a Minister. His name was proposed by Jatti and seconded by Hallikeri Gudleppa. The new Ministry was a much larger one and it contained three-tiers - Ministers, Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers. Patil's Ministry consisted of 12 Ministers, five Ministers of State and 11 Deputy Ministers. Incidentally, two of the Deputy Ministers, A.P. Appanna and S.M. Sogi had been this biographer's students at Madras Christian College in the late forties !

With detailed account, Nijalingappa's story as a Chief Minister of Mysore, later Karnataka, from 1st November, 1956 to 13-5-1968, comes to a close. We shall trace history as the Congress President and his role in the momentous split in the Congress and its aftermath in the next chapter. But we cannot end the story of his Chief Ministership at this point without appending to it a brief analytical interpretation and evaluation of his record as a CM. In short, we need to conclude our descriptive narrative with a theoretical gloss.

We shall go back to the beginning of this chapter to seek a theoretical frame-work in terms of which we can interpret and assess Nijalingappa's record as a Chief Minister. But before examining it, it is important to recognise the parameters which set the limits to what a Chief Minister, in fact any Chief

Minister, in India can do. The first parameter is, of course, the Indian Constitution which defines his powers, functions and the manner in which he becomes a Chief Minister. It also defines his state as a constituent unit of a Union of similar units, and it shares powers and resources with the Centre as well as other States. Thus, a Chief Minister works under a severe resource constraint. He depends heavily on the financial support of the Centre, and planning policy involves a high degree of centralisation of resources and authority. Though in the recent years, the states have managed to wrest some autonomy from the Centre, it remains by and large a political arrangement in which the balance of power tilts towards the Centre. As we have seen, Nijalingappa was perpetually driven to seek Central aid or as he called it, to approach the Centre with a begging bowl. The second handicap is also a structural handicap deriving from the liberal democratic nature of the polity in a parliamentary version. The party structures are weak and vulnerable to internal fissions, and when a party is in power, this tendency towards fission increases. Thus, most of the time and energy of a Chief Minister are consumed by what may be called party management. We have seen that for Nijalingappa the main source of political trouble was internal dissidence, and very rarely the opposition. Though the situation today has changed in view of the inability of any party gaining clear majority and thus necessitating coalition governments, during Nijalingappa's Chief Ministership, the opposition was too weak and too fragmented to pose any real threat. The factional struggles within the ruling party were inherently unresolvable because they were not based on any policy, principles or ideology. They were highly personalised and unstable groups, gathered round powerful and ambitious politicians bent on grabbng power at any cost. The grievances of the dissidents were sometimes genuine but they were all grievances of personal injustice. When one looks back on Nijalingappa's record of handling these problems, one must concede that it has been a reasonably good record.

As the Chief Administrator of the State, Nijalingappa, had to operate at three levels - political, bureaucratic and public. Perhaps he was least effective in political management, partly because of the intractability of the political situations and partly also because of his personality. He was too much of a gentleman to handle rough weather situations. Though he managed to survive crisis - Ekikarana and the Congress split - he found it difficult to handle extreme situations. Yet, his record in facing law and order situations, the college fees issue or the Goa merger issue or the border dispute was satisfactory, and here his asset was his cool and restrained approach to life. With regard to the bureaucratic level, though our account does not speak to the problem directly, it may be inferred negatively that Nijalingappa had no difficulty in dealing with his bureaucratic personnel or civil servants. At least, there is no evidence of any serious conflicts with the policy administrators at the level of secretaries to the Government. With his own ministerial colleagues, he was a classic example of a superior among equals. His public image during the time he was CM was always clean. He was certainly not a charismatic personality but he possessed other, more durable qualities of leadership, a democratic sharing of power with others, transparency, humility, lack of obsession with power and material gain and simplicity, while these were not the qualities to rouse public passion, they were certainly adequate to persuade the people to accept him as their leader. Secondly, as a leader of the ruling party in the legislature, he had to function democratically, and the record shows that he very rarely behaved in an overbearing or high - handed manner with the legislators in general. He was also a skilful parliamentarian as anyone can see from the published reports of the proceedings of the legislature. Here again, what strikes one is his honesty rather than any rhetorical flourish. It was not that he was not capable of repartee, but his normal mode was to share truth with his colleagues, whether ministers, legislators or administrators.

The foregoing account is basically on the side of inputs. But the ultimate assessment of a Chief Minister will have to be in terms of policy outputs. Here his record must be reckoned as distinguished, especially when one compares it with the records of subsequent Chief Ministers! From the perspective of policy output, it is convenient to divide his Chief Ministership into two historical periods - the first brief one from 1st November 1956 to 8 May 1958, and the second period extends from May 1962 to May 1968. During the first formative period of the new State of Mysore, Nijalingappa's task was first and foremost to tackle the post-integration issues reducing the diversities of five different historical systems to a reasonable uniformity without doing injustice to any one of them. The mere territorial integration had to be backed up by integration in legal systems, administrative systems and cultural systems. Above all, there was the most difficult and intangible task of emotional integration. If the State has survived for the last four decades, the credit should go to its Chief Minister who performed the foundational act. No separatist movements emerged as in the neighbouring State of Andhra and Maharashtra. The second important policy area in which his contribution has been lasting is the area of agriculture and irrigation. To this must be added the attention he gave to the question of energy and power. The Sharavati Project remains his monumental contribution which is a combined contribution to agriculture, irrigation and power. Even if irregularities in its construction are proved, they may turn out to be marginal at best, and, in any case, nobody has ever accused Nijalingappa of personal corruption. The tradition of corruption in high political places is a post-Nijalingappa phenomenon. In the second period, besides continuing the work begun in the first period, Nijalingappa made significant contribution to industrial and educational development of the State. However, Nijalingappa himself, in a discussion with this writer and other discussions with other persons, regretted his shift from the arena of state politics to the national political arena because, in his thinking, he had left many important irrigation and hydel projects unfinished. In the field of social

justice and social welfare, his contribution has been commendable. In spite of the legal obstacles, he attempted to improve the conditions of the backward classes and the SCs and STs, though he warned them that their own ultimate salvation lay in their own hands, and that too much of dependence on the State would harm them in the end.

In a personal discussion with this biographer, with characteristic modesty, Nijalingappa regarded two of his achievements as most significant-Sharavati Project and the scheme of pension for destitute old people. While admiring his modesty, we cannot ignore the long list of his other contributions to the progress and prosperity of the State. Even a cursory glance at this list would establish beyond doubt the fact that he is the chief architect of modern Karnataka or Karnataka's Roovari, in the expressive language of Dr.Javare Gowda, the author of the first comprehensive biography of Nijalingappa. No sooner he took over as Chief Minister of the new State in 1956, than in May next year he got laid the foundation stone for the Sharavati Hydel Project, and against all odds got the project completed in a remarkably short period of six years. He took personal interest in it, and often supervised the work personally. His idea was that, irrigation projects were crucial for a largely agricultural population, and that these projects would go a long way in alleviating the problems of poverty and unemployment. Indeed, he proved himself to be the most far-seeing Chief Minister in the country. He also initiated the Narayanapura upper Krishna project and Almatti dams, and got their foundation stones laid by Lal Bahadur Shastri. He got Indira Gandhi to lay the foundation stone of Malaprabha Project. He was also behind the other Projects - Ghataprabha, Hemavati, Harangi and Kabini. These Projects have immensely benefited the farmers of Karnataka. Then he also paid great attention to forest development schemes.

His efforts to solve the water problem of Bangalore city resulted in the Cauvery project. Among the other towns which

benefited from his policy of solving water problem was Mangalore, Mysore, Belgaum, Bellary, Chitradurga. But this policy of promoting agricultural development was never at the cost of industrial development. He provided facilities for small-scale industries and large-scale industries in Hubli, Mysore and other towns. It was his Government that initiated the establishment of aluminium, electronic and rayon factories in the State. A few sugar factories were also set up during his Chief Ministership. He played a key role in the establishment of Visweswaraiah Industrial and Technological Museum to coincide with the centenary celebration of Karnataka's great statesman-administrator. He also pursued a vigorous policy of inviting outside capital especially from Bombay, to come to the State and promote its industrial development. His Government made significant gains in the field of land reforms, initiated by a Committee under B.D. Jatti's chairmanship. It benefited many landless rural families. He also promoted the development of rural Karnataka by establishing schools, drinking water schemes and roads in most villages. He was responsible for the scheme of granting pension to political sufferers and destitute old persons. Perhaps, Karnataka was the only State in India to grant pension to old people at that time. He also promoted a policy of removing untouchability by getting the Harijan houses built amidst the residential areas of other castes, and thus rejected the earlier practice of segregating their colonies. His contribution to the educational development of the State is no less significant. Bangalore University and the Agricultural University in Hebbal were established during his regime. Apart from higher education, he paid great attention to primary and secondary levels of education. In fact, he was one of the few political leaders and Chief Ministers in India to emphasise that priority should be shifted from University education to primary and secondary education. He was also responsible for the progress of technical and medical education. Medical colleges in Hubli, Davanagere, Gulbarga, Belgaum, Bellary, Bangalore (St. John's) and Manipal were established during his tenure as CM. He took keen interest

in the development of Kannada language, literature and culture. He inaugurated the tradition of providing writers and artists with monthly pension.

Above all, he made invaluable contribution to the very survival and identity of Karnataka State by achieving the overall integration of the five sub-regions of the State in terms of their administrative, economic, political and cultural dimensions. More importantly, he saw to it that they were integrated regarding their laws, especially in the matter of land tenure. In this connection, one must record appreciatively his efforts to safeguard the territorial integrity of the State by handling skilfully the border disputes with Maharashtra and other States. He was polite but firm, ready to negotiate reasonably but unyielding on essentials. In this, he showed a truly Gandhian frame of mind. His achievements also include Venkatappa Art Gallery, NIMHANS, Kidwai Hospital and the Cricket Stadium. The Stadium, perhaps the best in the country was established against heavy odds. His commitment to Indian culture and civilization prompted him to help the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan by giving it generously land in Bangalore to establish its centre.

We may list selectively his other significant achievements as the first CM of Karnataka. They are : Kudremukh Iron Ore Project on a big scale, a small car project which unfortunately failed to receive the support of the Centre, and the grant of land for the rehabilitation of Tibetan refugees in Mundgod in North Kannada district and Periyapatnam taluka of Mysore district. The list can be virtually extended but it should suffice to demonstrate his glorious achievements as the first CM and a founding father of the new State.

In short, any objective assessment of his tenure as the CM of the State would demonstrate that he must be reckoned as one of the best, perhaps the CM, Karnataka was fortunate to have but also as one of the hundreds of modern Karnataka and through Karnataka of the modern India.

# 6. THE CONGRESS SPLIT AND THE AFTERMATH

There can be scarcely any dispute about the centrality of the event known as Congress split in the political history of modern India, especially in its post-colonial phase. But one should see that it was essentially an event situated in the political superstructure and that its relationship to the deeper socio-economic and cultural processes that have been at work in the history of modern India since the inauguration of British imperial control, remains problematic. But, in post-colonial countries, where civil societies have been caught up in deep and often unresolvable crises and hence unable to generate any genuine strength of their own, politics has tended to become almost autonomous and overpowering without the countervailing check of civil society, as was the case in modern liberal, industrial and capitalistic systems of the West. That is why Indian political processes in the colonial and post-colonial India acquire an importance far beyond the limited superstructural status assigned to them in Western liberal democratic societies. Therefore, from this perspective it may be justified to examine the Congress split of 1969 as a more than political event. Nijalingappa was propelled by the accident of history to become the hero in that complex historical drama. However, one should take care to see that it was not a sudden and abrupt eruption but the culmination of antecedent historical developments. Hence, we shall first provide a brief sketch of these antecedent developments before focussing on the split itself.

While it is true that the event had a concrete, personal character in terms of two individual persons, Indira Gandhi and Nijalingappa, the personal drama must be seen as being played within a wider and deeper historical context of impersonal forces. It was, above all, a manifestation of an inter-generational conflict. By the 1960s, those born after the end of the colonial history in 1947, had grown into a generation of youth, flexing their youthful muscles and representing the impact of an upbringing in a world without the sort of Gandhian idealism that had characterised the generations exposed to the Gandhian theory and practice of nationalism and idealism. In any case, the kind of high idealism and self-sacrificing commitment to nationalism, which Gandhiji was able to mobilise against the British, were no longer available as role-models for the post-1947 generation, the midnight's children in Rushdie's telling phrase. And the worst of it was disillusionment and cynicism that could not but arise when the erstwhile moral and idealistic heroes of the Gandhian era became transformed by the logic of power into a pack of power-mongering politicians, with the Congress itself having undergone a radical reincarnation as a political party and no longer an inspiring national movement. Even such stalwarts as Patel and Nehru, however great they might have been, as the heroes of the freedom struggle, had, quite logically and legitimately, become entangled in the politics of power. But in thier case, their Gandhian upbringing was too strong to turn them into purely power-oriented political animals. Before criticising this apparent downfall from idealism, one must recognise this process as a natural historical process. Once this is done, one can see that the best of the survivors from the Gandhian magical era, including Nijalingappa, were great human beings, engaged in the very human drama of balancing idealism with realism within a legitimate institutional context,

the context of a liberal democratic polity. Some or perhaps most from this generation, however, succumbed to the component of power in this balancing process, and virtually abandoned the Gandhian and idealistic component. In short, it may be argued that, at least a part, the conflict between the so-called Syndicate and its opponents was also a conflict between generations. Such are the ironies of history that the conflict involved a post-Gandhian generation attacking a generation surviving from the Gandhian era of abandoning Gandhian ideals ! It may, therefore, be argued that the Split should be seen in the long historical perspective as part of a process in which a post-colonial nation was trying to work out a legitimate balance between idealism and pragmatism. It should not surprise anyone that, in this process, the pendulum has swung from one end to the other and back, from idealism to a pragmatism and back ! It is this historical insight that one must grasp and not just take the easy way out by condemning Indira Gandhi or the Syndicate, according to one's predilections and perspectives. Of course, one must take a clear position in the conflict between the two, but one must also temper it by the larger historical perspective. This alone would guarantee that minimal historical justice is done to all the historical figures caught up in the cauldron of history.

We shall now proceed to examine the concrete historical developments and analyse them in the light of the broader theoretical frame-work briefly offered above. Though Nijalingappa was always an intensely regionalist leader, with deep roots in local life and commitment to its progress and welfare, it should not be forgotten that he always maintained reasonable links with national political life and leadership. He was a member of the Constituent Assembly, as well as a member of Parliament, and

he was close to some of the top leaders, especially Sardar Patel with whom he corresponded regularly and whose advice he sought. But with Nehru he always felt somewhat distant, and he has always felt that Nehru's knowledge and understanding of Indian rural life and its problems to be almost non-existent and thought that Patel would have been a more appropriate Prime Minister for the country. But this did not mean that he had no regard or appreciation of Nehru's personal qualities - his charm, his personal integrity and his nationalism. Nehru seems to have reciprocated this sense of mutual alienation, not with hostility but mere distance. This fact and Nijalingappa's profound regional involvement kept him at a healthy distance from national politics. His first foray into the jungle of national politics can be roughly dated from 1963 when Nehru's failing health and his mental frustration in the aftermath of Chinese aggression prompted a group of senior Congressmen, later nick-named the Syndicate, face the problem of post-Nehru succession. The original group consisted of Atulya Ghosh, Nijalingappa, Sanjeeva Reddy, Srinivasa Mallya and Kamaraj Nadar. They met in the sacred South Indian pilgrim town of Tirupati in a secret confabulation, ostensibly to worship the great Venkateswara but actually to discuss the political future of the Congress Party and the country in the wake of Nehru's failing health and the uncertainties of an unknown future. The party had also done badly recently in the Parliamentary by-elections to Farukabad, Amroha and Rajkot. Morarji's schemes of Gold Control and Compulsory Deposit had made the party, the Government unpopular. Their strategy was to take control of the party and to see that it was put on the right track, as they saw it. Their immediate task was to find a suitable person for the presidentship of the Congress party, and here they had to take into account the fact that whoever became the party President,

he would play an important role in the succession game that would have to take place soon in view of Nehru's failing health. They found that Lal Bahadur Shastri would fit the bill especially because he was acceptable to Nehru. They rejected Morarji as too rigid and uncompromising. However, Nijalingappa wanted to be ready with an alternative if Shastri did not accept the offer. They persuaded Kamaraj to be the alternative to Shastri. This arrangement was felt to be the best possible as it was calculated to keep the party under the control of the Syndicate. They had to placate Morarji by arguing that this had to be done to keep Indira Gandhi out ! But Morarji told them that he would contest against Shastri. They adopted the tactic of spoiling Morarji's chances by spreading the word round that Panditji was opposed to him ! Nehru was not opposed to Shastri's name, but he suggested that Kamaraj himself should take up the presidentship. Nehru also used Kamaraj to get rid of those whom he did not want , in office, and thus was born the Kamaraj Plan - in fact, Nehru Plan in disguise ! The other members of the Syndicate besides the Tirupati group were S.K. Patil and Biju Patnaik. In any case, it was not a clearly structured entity, and apart from the core group it had elastic boundaries.

When Nehru died suddenly taking his senior party colleagues off guard, it was once again the Syndicate that swung into action in 1964 to play a key role in the second succession drama. G.L. Nanda was sworn in immediately as the temporary PM. Now the issue was who should become Nehru's successor? It was Shastri versus Morarji. Eventually, Shastri won out because he was considered by the Syndicate to be more easy to handle than obstinate Morarji. Morarji who joined Shastri's Cabinet was not even given the No.2 position, which went to

Nanda. Shastri also inducted Indira Gandhi into his Cabinet though she got the low profile portfolio of Information and Broadcasting, reportedly at her own request. Shastri's even more sudden death in distant Tashkent led to the third succession drama, and once again the Syndicate played a key role in choosing Indira Gandhi in preference to Morarji on the ground that the lady would be more easy to manage. Nijalingappa's membership in the Syndicate had already pushed him towards Delhi and pulled him away from Bangalore ! It was not that he was conscious of this flow of events. Even so, he was very reluctant, as we saw, to move away from his state moorings into the tricky waters of Delhi politics. His friends like Veerendra Patil, Hegde and Gurupada Swamy advised him against taking up the Congress presidentship. We have already told the story of Nijalingappa's becoming the President of the 71st Session of the Congress held in Hyderabad, a change from the original venue of Sangli. The change was prompted by the devastating Koyna earthquake which made the area out of bounds. But we shall try to focus here on Nijalingappa's presidential address as a key to his thinking on the problems facing the nation, and as a prelude to his more direct role at the national level. There is evidence that Indira Gandhi took an active interest in Nijalingappa's becoming the President, presumably for the same reason that had prompted the Syndicate to choose her as the PM, namely, the possibility of controlling and even manipulating! Indira Gandhi turned out to be as wrong in her estimate of Nijalingappa as the Syndicate had been in its estimate of Indira Gandhi !

Nijalingappa started off his address by noting that, despite the progress made in the previous twenty years in many fields,

there was now greater dissatisfaction with the party and the government than ever before. He referred especially to Congress debacles in the recent elections. He called for a critical introspection and, through it, the country should gain confidence to tackle its basic problems - poverty, unemployment, disease, illiteracy. Since Congress was in power in the last two decades, both achievements and failures must be attributed to it. Now the political situation had changed, with non-Congress governments in the saddle, mostly of the united front coalition types, in several states. The brief record of these united front governments had clearly shown that they were not an effective alternative to the Congress. Behind this development lay an irrational anti-Congressism fuelled by interested politicians. The law and order situation had deteriorated very badly in the states under non-Congress governments. This had led to break-down of the rule of law and the emergence of lawless violence. These developments constituted a threat to Indian democracy. Touching on the language problem, he appealed to both pro-Hindi and anti-Hindi groups to evolve a reasonable and balanced programme and, in fact, draw on the policies evolved during Nehru's time. He appealed to all states to sort out inter-state conflicts over the border issue or sharing of river waters with good-will and mutual accommodation. Pointing out to the critical nature of the economy due to the Chinese aggression, Pakistan war and droughts, leading to inflation and food shortage, he noted that there was some improvement in agricultural production. This was made possible by the green revolution. But this momentum must be utilised for better agricultural production which would lead to a better life for the bulk of our people who lived in the rural areas. Pleading for greater inputs into the agrarian sector such as fertilizers,

water, better seeds and so on, he said that there was another crucial input to which adequate attention had not been paid, and that was the availability of credit from the banks. But the most important input, however, was irrigation, the life-blood of an agrarian economy. He pleaded for greater investment in irrigation and also better water management. He suggested that these purely economic inputs would have to be backed up by radical socio-political change in terms of land reforms and Panchayatraj. On the industrial front, bigger industries had to be established, but this "craze for gigantism" should be tempered by a policy of industrial dispersal and de-concentration, primarily governed by the need for raw materials and water rather than the market. On the labour front, while the legitimate claims of labour should be respected, its irresponsibility and negative approach needed to be curbed. Small-scale and cottage industries deserved a better deal because they generated substantial employment opportunity at local levels. On the social justice front, greater efforts needed to be made to improve the lot of the SCs and STs. On foreign policy, by and large, Nehru's policy should be implemented. He paid Nehru a glowing tribute by declaring, "... Pandit Nehru, the finest product of our culture, the keenest student of world politics and one of the greatest statesmen of all times has left valuable lessons for us to follow in this behalf ...". On China, Nijalingappa drew a distinction between the peace-loving people of China and "the autocratic, dictatorial and expansionist leadership of the Communist Party as it is set up in China and which is distorting and twisting communist philosophy for its own selfish ends." He pleaded for a relationship based on justice and fair-play. He had the same prescription for our policy towards Pakistan. He thanked both America and Russia for the help they had

extended to India in spite of its policy of non-alignment. While foreign help could at best be marginal, ultimate salvation lay in self-help and self-reliance. Then he emphasised the need for family-planning. He appealed for a serious review of the entire administrative machinery that had survived from the British police raj. Could it go well with our ideals of a democratic, welfare state ? Then there was also the question of involving the people in the developmental programmes. On the all-important goal of "Democratic Socialism" accepted by the Congress and based on the notions of democracy, dignity of the individual and social justice, our record was very discouraging. Greater clarity regarding these notions and their implementation was required to be had by all parties in the country. The Ten-point programme proposed by the Congress was in this direction but it could be implemented only with the active and informed co-operation of the people. The Congress had a great responsibility because it was the only party with organisational roots everywhere and had a great tradition. At this point, he recalled Gandhiji, and said, "We have to help our younger colleagues to rediscover Gandhiji by ourselves returning to the path he showed - paths of truth, non-violence and combining profession with practice ..." Turning to the issue of Centre-State relations, he rightly argued that this issue had acquired a new significance now that different parties controlled the Centre and the States. There was need for a transfer of greater autonomy and resources to the States so that they also were given greater responsibility. Also, anti-Centre attitudes should be carefully monitored and not allowed to be politically exploited. A person with a keen eye for practical organizational details, he naturally wanted the Congress to be re-organised into a better-managed and streamlined machinery. Above all,

common people should be educated and especially taught that Karma did not mean fate but a dynamic philosophy of action. Then he emphasised the key role of youth in national development. He suggested that better co-ordination was needed between the different governmental structures and levels. He ended his well-organised, well-thought-out and comprehensive address with an assertion of his faith in optimism, a faith in the Congress and a faith in the people of India.

The relationship between Indira Gandhi as PM and Nijalingappa as the Congress Chief was bound to become problematic sooner or later, not only because of their personalities and ideological horizons but also because ambiguity and tension inherent in the relationship between the Parliamentary wing and the organizational wing in a Parliamentary democracy. There are no structural solutions to this problem and there can only be personal equations. The issue is whether the PM as a party nominee should be responsible to the party or as the PM of the entire nation be responsible to her perception of what constituted the national interest above party interest. Nehru had his share of the problem with Purushottamdas Tandon, and if Nijalingappa and Indira Gandhi were to fall out, this should be at least seen partly as inherent in the nature of things. It is difficult to pinpoint precisely when the relationship between the two soured and one can only note the developments as they occurred in time. In August 1968, when the USSR invaded Czechoslovakia, Nijalingappa and his liberal democratic and democratic socialist friends including Atulya Ghosh, Ashok Mehta, C.B. Gupta and Gurupadaswamy, were inclined to be critical of USSR as against Indira Gandhi's pro-Russian position. But such differences soon accumulated

into potential threats to the relationship between the two. Moreover, as already suggested, there was also a generation gap operating here. The PM had begun to gather younger persons around her while the Congress Chief, given his background, was likely to be surrounded by senior comrades from the days of the freedom struggle. There was also the issue of escalating corruption in the Government and much politicking among the partymen to grab power and position, an issue on which the PM could not be as strict as the party President.

As the Congress President, Nijalingappa was a conscientious worker, dedicated to his job with a missionary zeal. He looked into the smallest detail of the cases that came up before him and was naturally shocked by the spectacular decline in political and public morality in the country, and the total departure from the old Gandhian ideals. His residence in Delhi became an open house and a public forum with people coming and going throughout the day. Nijalingappa was always a disciplinarian both in his relations with others and with himself. He woke up early and began his work at 8 AM sharp and normally continued till 10 PM, often extending to midnight. His breakfast, lunch and dinner were mostly mixed up with his official activities, and thus the thin line between his public and private life became increasingly blurred. He was literally smothered with complex problems of the party organization which had been steadily and slowly deteriorating into an instrument for nothing more than electioneering and power-grabbing. It must have been an agonising experience for a person like Nijalingappa who was genuinely committed to Gandhian ideals. His diary is replete with details that record the tragic story of our national decline in terms of public and political

morality. Some day, the pages of this diary should be used to reconstruct the history of our corruption and moral collapse! In the meanwhile, the differences between him and Indira Gandhi were on the increase from day to day. Nijalingappa was hurt that she was not respecting the advice of senior and experienced Congressmen like the members of the so-called Syndicate - Atulya Ghosh, S.K.Patil, Kamaraj and Sanjeeva Reddy - and was under the unhealthy influence of younger and perhaps questionable partymen like Dinesh Singh. At this juncture, Nijalingappa was inclined to blame the coterie around Indira Gandhi more than Indira Gandhi herself. In fact, he assured her that if she corrected herself, with full faith in her colleagues, and carried on the administration with objectivity and impartiality, he would extend her his full support.

Early in 1969, elections were due to be held in some States. As usual, the election fever afflicted everybody, galvanising the parties into sudden life. It was also the time when the worst side of politicians as well as the electorate came to be displayed. Factionalism within the Congress, with the followers of Indira Gandhi and Morarji neatly divided into rival camps, began to raise its ugly head. But the President himself remained unaffected by all this questionable activity going on around him, and tried to stick to his basic commitment to the nation and its security and progress. Nijalingappa must have been shocked to see erstwhile Gandhians indulging in the most un-Gandhian activities! Nijalingappa had the unenviable task of treading between rival camps, and he was especially called upon to perform a tight-rope-walking between his friends in the Syndicate and Indira Gandhi, without being too unfair to either party! In this delicate task, Nijalingappa's natural sense

of fairness, his gentle and non-aggressive personality as symbolised by his smiling face, and his virtually inexhaustible patience seem to have stood him in good stead. Thus, he managed to survive the first year of his presidentship without much damage to himself or to others. At the purely personal and subjective level, it was also the period in which Nijalingappa found himself exposed to wider international influences, which enabled him to enrich his personality. Of course, his understanding of his own country and its people also gained significantly during his work as the Congress President. What pained him most at this time was the escalating cost of electioneering, which was bound to lead to corruption and even criminalisation of politics. The worst consequence of this was inability of intellectuals and decent persons to think of contesting the elections. Nijalingappa saw the emergence of a nexus between money and politics. The Congress was at the centre of all this development, and it was distancing itself from the Gandhian ideals of truth and non-violence. As Congress President, he had to tour a lot, and he had to face the language problem whenever he had to visit Hindi areas. His usual practice was to begin in broken Hindi and then switch over to English. His speech was later given in Hindi translation. In the meanwhile Indira Gandhi was developing her own strength in political terms, grooming her young supporters, so that she could, when ready, risk a show-down with the Syndicate. Her young supporters came to be nick-named Young Turks by the press and the public. The best known of them, Chandrasekhar, mounted a savage attack on Morarji in the Rajya Sabha, and it was generally suspected that Indira Gandhi was behind this move. This suspicion gains strength when one realises that Indira Gandhi was absent at the meeting of Congress parliamentarians

which discussed this issue. When the meeting resolved to ask Chandrasekhar to express his regret, Indira Gandhi openly supported the Young Turk.

Such apparently small incidents multiplied and the Syndicate was understandably alarmed. On the night of 13.3.1969, Sanjeeva Reddy who was at the time the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Nijalingappa, D.C. Sharma, Kamaraj, S.K.Patil and Atulya Ghosh, met at Reddy's place, and Reddy hosted them a dinner. They discussed the plight of the country and the Congress party. They decided that, if necessary in the interest of national security, they should work for a change in the Government, and, in any case, they ought to be wary of Indira Gandhi who was going all out to destroy the older leadership by hook or crook. They were disturbed by the developments all over the country. Nijalingappa expressed his total disapproval of D.P.Mishra's intrigues and politicking in Madhya Pradesh. He was also unhappy that S.C.Shukla had won the contest for the position of leader of the legislature party. Brahmananda Reddy reported that the Telangana movement had reached a violent form. What pained Nijalingappa particularly was the report that, inspired by the Telangana movement, moves were afoot in Karnataka for the creation of two Karnatakas. Mishra, frustrated at his failure to become the leader in Madhya Pradesh, tried to wreck vengeance on Congress President, Nijalingappa, who welcomed, in fact his efforts to move a no-confidence motion against him as an occasion to expose the hollowness of his detractors. The lack of coherence at the Centre encouraged the State leaders to get embroiled in internal factional squabbles. The whole culture of legislators and politicians in the country seemed to have undergone a change

for the worse. The new idea was that politics and political offices should be misused for monetary gain! Naturally, Nijalingappa posed a problem to the proponents of the new culture of self-aggrandisement, and they did not hesitate to carry on false propaganda against Nijalingappa. Nijalingappa, supreme realist as ever, reflected on the national predicament in his diary. He wrote, "...well, it is possible to remove Indira Gandhi from Prime Ministership. Not very difficult to do. But who is there to take her place? There is no doubt that, if she is removed, she would split the Congress. This is a situation fraught with the danger of anarchy. That is why seniors must have great patience ..."

The Faridabad Session of the Congress held in the last week of May, 1969, was crucial and momentous event. By the 24th of April 1969 PCC Presidents and the Secretaries gathered in Delhi. They met on that day to discuss the report on the re-organization of the Congress party. Indira Gandhi made a very brief intervention by speaking for just half an hour and then left the meeting. Apparently she expected the President to get her clearance for his address. But Nijalingappa thought otherwise. His understanding was that it was left to the President to discuss it with the PM but there was no question of it being subjected to PM's scrutiny. At 4 P.M., Nijalingappa proceeded to Faridabad with his entourage. All through the journey, he was greeted by claps and joyous shouting by the crowd on the wayside. Seventytwo arches had been put up to denote that it was the 72nd Session. It was 6 in the evening when the President reached the bungalow reserved for him. Then at 7-30 P.M., the Working Committee reviewed the matters to be discussed in the Session, the Subjects Committees and the Open Session.

The next day, the President unfurled the national flag at 8 A.M. When the Subjects Committees were being formed, there was shout of "Fire ! Fire !" from a corner of the main hall especially put up for the occasion (around 9-30 A.M.) . The fire blazing behind the platform on which the President and the members of the Working Committee were seated, soon invaded the hall as if it was going to gobble it up. There was utter chaos, and everybody, including the President, left everything behind and ran helter-skelter. About three quarters of the hall was gutted in the fire. The fire-fighters who rushed to the scene managed to quell the fire, thus restoring the confidence of the people. Stunned by the situation, Bansilal, the Chairman of the Reception Committee, set to work hard to rebuild on the ruins, and succeeded in erecting a substitute hall by the next evening. On the 27th, the Congress deliberated on the reports of the Subjects Committees, the various sub-committees, the resolutions relating to the re-organization of the Congress and the political situation in the country. Indira Gandhi and Morarji Desai delivered speeches as if they were in a debating contest! At 6 P.M., Nijalingappa read out his Presidential address. In essence, this address proceeded more or less on the same lines on his address to the 71st Congress. But there were also a few new ideas in it. For one thing, he was more critical of linguistic states as they appeared to him now to threaten national unity and suggested that it might be necessary to abolish them and re-structure states on economic grounds. He attributed the increase in corruption among officials to the system of licensing. He called for a drastic reduction in the controls. He was also critical of coalition governments, and felt that they were unworkable. But suppose they were unavoidable ? This was not a question of immediate relevance for him or the country, though

the united front governments then existing did give one a foretaste of what a coalition government could be. Of course, it is a crucial question before us today, and our political culture will have to change to accommodate this important change in our political life. He was always keen on the role of youth in our public life and he once again gave them a call to shoulder national responsibilities. During the debate on Nijalingappa's speech, K.D. Malaviya, Mohan Dharia, Chandrasekhar and their co-horts, mounted a severe criticism of his industrial policy. They dubbed it reactionary. Apparently supported by Indira Gandhi, the Young Turks flaunted their socialism. The Congress President countered them by rejecting their imported socialism and by proclaiming his own Swadeshi brand of socialism ! He was forced to continue as the President for one more year because the party had resolved to postpone all party elections by one year.

Nijalingappa who was busy in his office received the shocking news on 3.5.1969 that the President of India had passed away. Zakir Hussain had been ailing for some time and he did not, like Presidents before and after him to go abroad for treatment at the expense of the country. Even before his dead body was buried, rumours about the successor were rife in the capital. For instance, it was rumoured that Indira Gandhi might choose Jagjivan Ram, Sanjivayya or Jayapraksh Narayan as the next President. Some even suggested Nijalingappa's name in this connection. Kamaraj, too, seemed to be interested but he kept silent over it, hoping that someone would suggest his name ! Giri who was the temporary President by virtue of the constitutional provision, also showed his interest and even discussed the issue with Nijalingappa. With so many names

bandied about, Nijalingappa felt that the choice must be purely on merit since this was the highest office in the land. He was, therefore, not inclined to be in a hurry about the matter. He was to go on a foreign tour and he thought he could attend to the matter after his return from abroad. When he mentioned his mind to Indira Gandhi on 15-5-1969, she pulled a long face and shifted the conversation to other topics ! She also lost her temper when Nijalingappa mentioned the issue of paying back the loans the Congress party had raised. She stated that it was the business of the party Treasurer, S.K. Patil. Obviously, a clear rift was developing between Nijalingappa and Indira Gandhi. This was brought to his notice by Raj Bahadur and Baliram Bhagat. As Congress President, Nijalingappa regarded foreign visits as part of his duty as they meant establishment of friendly contacts and also exposure to different systems and cultures. In 1968, he had made a successful tour of Japan for nine days, and now he was planning to visit Europe from 18-5-1969. During his journey, he was impressed by the haunting beauty of Beirut city, the architecture of the pyramids, the Nile river valley project, Belgrade city and the art treasures of Rome. He took the opportunity to meet Nasser and Tito, and discussed with them problems of mutual interests. He visited the major cities of Europe - Vienna, Bonn, Berlin, and London. During these visits, he enjoyed opera and Beethoven's music. In London, he was given a splendid welcome. In England, he enjoyed the peaceful atmosphere of Oxford and Cambridge. He was able to eat Indian vegetarian dishes like Idli and Dosa in Indian homes, and when he could not get them, he lived on fruits and milk. In any case, he followed the dietary regimen of one meal a day, restricting his evening food to fruits and milk. On 16-6-1969, after a very enjoyable and instructive sojourn, he returned home to Inida, where a mess was waiting for him !

Before analysing and interpreting the Congress split, it is necessary first to reconstruct the chronicle of events, a narrative account based on bare factual data available. Whatever the long-range causes for it, there is little doubt that its immediate cause was the presidential election that followed the death of Zakir Hussain. But this issue arose because of the widening gulf between Indira Gandhi and the Syndicate, as was evident during the Faridabad Congress. Fearing that the Syndicate might try to remove her from power and convinced that they were opposed to her, Indira Gandhi found herself driven to seek new allies - the CPI and the regional parties in the states. In Kerala she joined hands with the Muslim League, in Tamil Nadu with the DMK, in the Punjab with the Akalis, in Orissa with Jana Congress, and in Gujarat with the Swatantra party. All these were purely opportunistic arrangements whose only basis was power-sharing. This could be understood only as a strategy of survival. While it could be rationalised in terms of the interest of an individual politician, it should also be bluntly criticised as opportunistic and unprincipled politics. Then one must ask the question whether her political opponents were more principled and high-minded. While one could certainly and rightly argue that Nijalingappa cannot be accused of political opportunism and unprincipled politics, one would hesitate to extend this courtesy to the entire membership of the Syndicate. The problem here is not one of indulging in simplistic moral evaluation but a realistic perception of politics as a game of power, a struggle in a Hobbesian jungle. From this angle, Nijalingappa might be regarded as a poor politician. But for a Gandhian like him, politics without morality would hardly qualify as politics at all ! Given her perception that it was a naked struggle for power, she behaved as she did - going about systematically to build supportive political alliances and destroying those posing a threat to her power and position.

Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that she was anxious to have a person of her choice installed as the President of India.

It was against this backdrop of political conflicts and intrigues that the Bangalore Session of the Congress opened in July 1969. The Young Turks placed before it what they regarded as a progressive and socialistic programme. They insisted on nationalising the banks. Indira Gandhi did not attend the first day's meeting of the Working Committee. During the debate on the draft economic resolution prepared by C.Subramaniam and S.Sadiq Ali, without prior notice, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed abruptly intervened to present to the meeting a four-page note prepared by Indira Gandhi. This was procedurally a questionable act since the note was, in fact, a letter addressed to Ahmed personally, and not meant for either the President or the Secretary. Its main thrust was towards faster economic progress, and it also maintained that nationalisation of banks was inevitable. When the draft economic resolution came up for discussion on the 10th, Indira Gandhi was present. There was a head-on collision between her and S.K. Patil. The Committee became polarised fairly clearly into two camps - Indira Gandhi's supported by Chavan, Jagjivan Ram, Kamaraj, Subramaniam and Ramsubhag Singh, and Nijalingappa's backed by Morarji, C.B. Gupta, S.K.Patil and Atulya Ghosh. Whatever Indira Gandhi's own subjective motivations and personal ambitions, this rift must be seen at one level as an ideological rift. Therefore the non-ideological interpretation of the Congress Split, so ably presented by Atulya Gosh in his polemic, THE SPLIT IN INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, (Jayanti Publishers, Calcutta, 1970 - Price Rs.5/-) with a closely reasoned introduction by Nijalingappa cannot be accepted without serious reservations. It need hardly be suggested here

that all ideological disputes in history have been complicated by personal and subjective motivations and ambitions. This is equally true of the great Split. Sanjeeva Reddy was in the mind of the Syndicate, including Nijalingappa, for the position of the President. They had even made known their mind much earlier. Naturally, Indira Gandhi was aware of it. In the meeting of the parliamentary affairs committee held on 12th July 1969, Sanjeeva Reddy was accepted as the official candidate for the Presidentship by four to two votes. Indira Gandhi's candidate Jagjivan Ram failed to win the contest. Morarji, Chavan, Kamaraj and S.K. Patil voted for Reddy, while only Indira Gandhi and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed voted for Jagjivan Ram. Nijalingappa and Jagjivan Ram refrained from voting. Indira Gandhi, an expert rationaliser, warned the Syndicate that it was unfortunate that a Harijan was not made the President of India in Gandhi Centenary Year, and that this would have a calamitous effect on the country's political life ! Though there were rumours that Nijalingappa, Morarji and Kamaraj were also interested in the position, the evidence does not support the rumours.

The following morning Giri announced from the Rashtrapati Bhavan where he was in temporary residence, that he was a candidate for the position. The Congress President Nijalingappa, made the official announcement that Reddy was the Congress candidate. Thus a contest became inevitable. In the meanwhile, the Opposition parties began to consider whether they should set up their own candidate. Whatever her inner feelings, Indira Gandhi told the press that she would abide by the decision of the Congress Parliamentary Party. As a first move in her plan to destroy the Syndicate, she removed Morarji from the Finance portfolio on the ground that he was opposed to bank nationalisation, and took charge of the department herself. Understandably, Morarji became furious. Acrimonious

letters were exchanged between the two. On 16-7-1969 Indira Gandhi requested Morarji not to resign but accept some other portfolio. Morarji's contention was that she had unilaterally and arbitrarily taken a decision without first ascertaining his views on bank nationalisation. Morarji resigned and justified his act in the Parliament on the ground that the least he could do in the light of the humiliation was to quit.

The Syndicate was determined to make Reddy President as they rightly thought that they could command substantial political influence with a man of their choice in the Presidential chair. They tried to take every step they thought necessary to accomplish this end. They were not keen on blowing the Morarji episode out of proportion. They were, in fact, keen on a compromise rather than a show-down. Nijalingappa met Indira Gandhi to persuade her to give back to Morarji his old portfolio in the interest of the party. Indira Gandhi, sensing in this move the weakness and helplessness of the Syndicate, refused to yield. On the contrary, she saw this as a good opportunity to weaken further her political enemies. She started to put into practice her economic programme without delay as part of her strategy. The essence of the strategy appears in retrospect to take her enemies by surprise, to excite public curiosity about her moves, and to enthuse the younger constituency within the party. She took it as an all-out operation. Her economic policy and programme got the Parliamentary seal of approval. She threatened the Syndicate that if they opposed her policies, she would distance herself from the Working Committee which was under their control. The Working Committee, fearing that any precipitative action would jeopardise Congress unity, refrained from forcing a show-down. On the issue of the Presidential candidate, the Working Committee resolved that the PM and the Party President should address an ordinary meeting of the

Congress Parliamentary party to express openly their support to the official candidate, Reddy. Officially, Indira Gandhi had signed Reddy's nomination papers. In this confusing and confused situation, both the sides became cold, calculating and opportunistic. After all, it was a pure struggle for naked power, though its other dimensions did not disappear but became temporarily suspended. The air grew thick with political rumours. For instance, it was said that, once the Presidential election was over, the Syndicate would install a different Government. There was also the rumour that Indira Gandhi had joined hands with the Communists. In this battle, Indira Gandhi registered her first victory when G.S. Pathak and G.S. Dhillon, her candidates for the positions of Vice-President and Speaker, got the approval of the Congress Parliamentary Affairs Committee.

Determined to get the official Congress candidate elected as the President, Nijalingappa did not hesitate to seek the support of opposition parties ideologically distant from the Congress such as the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra party. It is worth noting that these were regarded in general popular perception as reactionary and conservative parties. Nijalingappa hobnobbed with the leaders of these parties and went round on tireless visits to solicit their support. Obviously, he resorted to this manoeuvre because he suspected that there was substantial opposition to the official candidate within the party itself. Giri declared himself as an Independent candidate and sought the support of the Communists and the Muslim League. Above all, he appealed to the electorate to exercise what he called the "conscience vote". He claimed that he was a Gandhian and hence opposed to the Congress. While Indira Gandhi was propelled more by the logic of naked power, the radical and left wing in the Congress saw in this an opportunity to rescue

the party from the clutches of the reactionary old guard. While Giri's victory meant for Indira Gandhi personal political power, it meant for the Congress Young Turks the triumph of their democratic socialist ideology. They did not hesitate to smear Nijalingappa with the charge that he represented a reactionary ideology. As we have already suggested such a characterisation of Nijalingappa would be an over-simplification. They made heavy use of the notion of conscience vote, and one of them, Arora, was asked by Nijalingappa to explain his anti-party conduct. Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed addressed a letter to Nijalingappa asking for an explanation of how the President could seek the support of Jan Sangh and Swatantra parties when they had opposed the Congress policies and had even gone to the court against the Bank Nationalisation Act. In his reply, Nijalingappa argued that he was acting according to the advice of the Congress Parliamentary Affairs Committee, that he had no intention to dislodge Indira Gandhi from power, that the Congress had not abandoned its ideals and that it was not wrong to seek the help of other parties in the national interest. In his capacity as the Congress President, he wrote to all Congress MPs, Congress MLAs, and DCC Presidents, asking them to support the official candidate of the Congress, Reddy. He condemned openly the notion of the conscience vote proposed by the Young Turks, and personally met party legislators to solicit support for Reddy.

Even three days prior to the election day, Indira Gandhi did not utter a single word in favour of the official candidate of the party. Indira Gandhi's kitchen cabinet began to function like a war office. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Jagjivan Ram addressed another letter to Nijalingappa on 13-8-1969, which repeated the earlier accusation. Answering Nijalingappa's argument that even earlier Indira Gandhi had sought the support

of other parties during the election of Zakir Hussain as the President, they said that at that time Indira Gandhi had tried to work out an arrangement in which the other parties and the Congress could reach a consensus before the opposition parties had suggested their own candidates in opposition to the Congress ! After the opposition parties had decided on their own candidates, Indira Gandhi did not approach them. Kamaraj Nadar who was then the Congress President did not also do what Nijalingappa was now doing. Nijalingappa however, read the situation as one in which the PM was acting against the official Congress candidate. From a perusal of events, it seems pretty clear that Indira Gandhi was violating the party discipline and that Nijalingappa was no match for her in the game of political intrigue and deception. We shall later on undertake a detailed and close-up view of the crucial letters exchanged between the Congress President and the PM. Indira Gandhi waited till the very end before declaring that everyone had a moral right to vote according to his or her conscience, without being bound by the party whip ! Commenting on the situation, another senior opposition leader, Atal Behari Vajpayee, condemned Indira Gandhi's behaviour as disgraceful and unheard of in the history of democratic politics on a global scale. Nijalingappa appealed to the PM in vain to rally round the official Congress candidate. On 14th August 1969, the Executive of the Congress Parliamentary Party passed the resolution that Congressmen should vote only for Reddy. Indira, wily as ever, took the view that this was not a unanimous resolution but only a majority resolution, and hence not binding on party men. The developing situation made the split in the party inevitable as both the groups had reached the point of no return. Both the groups invoked the name of democracy, the Congress President seeing in the situation a collapse of democracy and the PM seeing in it a triumph of democracy !

As it turned out, V.V. Giri won the election, and this signalled the victory of PM and defeat of the party President. Now it was clear that the political fortunes of Indira Gandhi were rising, and that Nijalingappa and the old guard were historical losers. Nijalingappa had now no doubt in his mind that the Syndicate would not be in a position to withstand Indira Gandhi's political onslaught . And he was among the first to congratulate Giri. But this was not an opportunistic move because he issued a press statement in which he described Giri as a person worthy of the respect and support of every Indian citizen but this did not mean that those who voted against the official Congress candidate had not been guilty of dereliction of duty. While the pro-Syndicate groups clamoured for severe disciplinary action against those voting against the party candidate, Indira Gandhi hailed the event as a victory for democracy, socialism and secularism. She claimed that the opposing groups within the party would unite under her leadership. Reddy openly condemned Indira Gandhi with justification for asking him to resign from office and stand for the election and then unceremoniously and shamelessly working against him in the Presidential election. In fact, poor Reddy had filed his nomination only after the PM gave him assurance of full support during a personal meeting on 24th July 1969. He was also bitter against Jagjivan Ram who, too, had personally given him assurance of full support and then stabbed him in the back. The Congress President made clear his commitment to democratic norms, party objectives and ideals and strict action against party indiscipline. His opponent, Indira Gandhi, on her part, went round meeting the Congress MPs to justify and explain her stand during the Presidential election. When Nijalingappa demanded an explanation from Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed about their conduct, they responded by pouring scorn and sheer abuse on the party

President. Attempts were made to bring the two warring sides together, with Chavan taking the initiative. In particular, he tried to arrange a meeting between Nijalingappa and Indira Gandhi. The Communists, anxious to see the Congress weakens through internal disintegration, openly backed up Indira Gandhi. Nijalingappa became furious with them on the ground that they were attempting to destabilise and disrupt the polity and nation. Indira Gandhi unleashed a vigorous propaganda against Nijalingappa and the old guard by deploying her emissaries all over the country, with the message that, if the party split, the blame would not be hers but that of the controllers of the party organization.

Some MPs urged the President of the party to expel Indira Gandhi and her supporters from the membership of the party. They also wrote to the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs that they would follow Indira Gandhi's precedent by exercising the conscience vote in the Parliament, disregarding the party whip! The PM countered by the threat that she might, if she found it unavoidable, have the House dissolved. The leftist and radical groups warned the organization leaders that if any attempt was made to move a no-confidence motion against Indira Gandhi in the Congress Parliamentary Party, there would be massive demonstrations before the party office, and the capital would be transformed into a battle-ground and chaos and violence and lawlessness would follow. Chavan, sitting pretty on the fence, advised the elders that Indira Gandhi could not be expelled from the party unless they first named a progressive alternative to her. He argued that otherwise the party would not gain the sympathy and support of the people. At this time, rumours were afloat that the Syndicate might name Chavan as an alternative to Indira Gandhi ! In the meeting of the Congress Working Committee held on 25th August 1969, Nijalingappa explained

the circumstances which led him to seek the support of other parties during the Presidential election. Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed who were present suggested that the situation could still be retrieved in the changed atmosphere. They pleaded for a cool consideration of the matter instead of an emotional approach. While they made this suggestion, they were not prepared to show repentance for what the old guard regarded as their misconduct. Kamaraj and S.K. Patil pleaded strongly for taking a tough stand against Indira Gandhi and her supporters. But, thanks to Chavan's tactfulness, Nijalingappa's gentle nature and Indira Gandhi's conciliatory attitude, the meeting which began with high passions concluded on a mellow note. A resolution on unity and security of the party was unanimously passed. Nijalingappa heaved a sigh of relief that the old chapter had come to an end. Indira Gandhi felt happy at the outcome and read it as a victory for her side. The meeting accepted the sensible position that the party President and the PM were not rival centres of power, that the broad policy frame-work was the responsibility of the President, that the PM was bound by it, that the PM's special responsibility for national and international policies should be recognised, and, above all, that the two leaders should respect the boundary dividing their functions. To mark the happy occasion, Indira Gandhi tried to organise a dinner, but it did not materialise. As for Nijalingappa, the hectic activities of the previous two months took their toll, and he developed a blood pressure problem. Indira Gandhi herself personally called on him to enquire about his health.

Encouraged by their success in the Congress Working Committee meeting Indira Gandhi's followers went all out to destroy the Syndicate through open as well as conspiratorial methods. The loyal supporters of the Organization were unhappy that the Working Committee had caved in to the pressures of

the Indira Gandhi group and had acted in a cowardly manner in accepting a compromise. The Syndicate was reduced to a handful of helpless old leaders. Nijalingappa himself was by now feeling physically and mentally exhausted, and S.K. Patil and Atulya Ghosh had developed indifference to the situation. Even Kamaraj felt paralysed into inaction. Morarji also felt lonely, isolated and helpless. The only person who skilfully exploited the situation to his advantage by playing his cards with caution and tact was Chavan. Nijalingappa worked for G.S. Pathak for the Vice-Presidentship. He enraged the Indira Gandhi brigade by declaring in Bangalore that personality cult and democracy would not go together. Nijalingappa moved very slowly and cautiously against Indira Gandhi because he wanted to save the party from a split at any cost. He virtually identified the Congress interest with national interest because he believed genuinely that the Congress was the only party capable of delivering the goods. This worked to Indira Gandhi's advantage and she left no stone unturned to exploit the situation. At the meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party held on 29th August 1969, Indira Gandhi declared that everyone, no matter to what party he or she belonged, was welcome to join the Congress if they had faith in democratic socialism. Nijalingappa's main problem with Indira Gandhi was that he held that she had allowed Communists to infiltrate the party. He said as such to the press in Bangalore on 4-9-1969. He added that he had no objection to their joining the party if they really believed in democractic socialism and were not infiltrating to destroy the party from within. In a long statement which bears summarising in full, he summed up the essence of his ideological position. The statement said that he was neither for American capitalism nor for Russian communism. He wanted a kind of Indian socialism which was compatible with Indian history and culture, and the aspirations of the people. He asserted that he

was second to none in his sympathy for the poor. He was a believer in the ideal of universal human welfare and happiness. He opposed concentration of wealth in few hands. He wanted everyone to be engaged in productive activity as that resulted in the overall development of the nation. He expressed his uncompromising commitment to liberal democracy and he would expel all parties opposed to it. He did not believe in empty slogans, and he held that a healthy competition between the public and private sectors would alone lead to efficiency. He concluded by saying that he would welcome heartily a new party that was dedicated to the goals of democracy, socialism and secularism. But, personally speaking, he would prefer to live and die as a Congressman ! As per the instructions of the Working Committee, the Congress President and the PM met on 8th September 1969 to sort out the issue of Morarji's resignation. Since it was their first friendly and personal encounter after a long gap of time, they did not go straight-way to serious matters, and spent their time mostly in the exchange of pleasantries. While Nijalingappa was doing his best to create a conciliatory atmosphere in the interest of the party, Indira Gandhi's followers were not ready to give up the cold war against him. It also aggravated the situation that Morarji took every opportunity he could to criticise the policy of the Government. In the meanwhile, Chavan came out openly in support of Indira Gandhi. At a seminar organised by the Maharashtra PCC, he declared his loyalty to the PM on 18th September 1969. ·He openly now criticised the official Congress decision on the Presidential candidate as hasty. Thus Indira Gandhi and her followers grew from strength to strength, and became emboldened to demand a special session of the Congress through a signature campaign. Obviously, their plan was to remove Nijalingappa from the party Presidentship and replace him by a President more amenable to Indira Gandhi's

manipulation. At this time, the Congress party seemed to be running into all sorts of problems. Owing to the internal squabbles in the Tamil Nadu Congress, C. Subramaniam had to resign from the PCC Presidentship. Since his place in the Working Committee was based on his position as the PCC President, it was brought to Nijalingappa's notice that Subramaniam had lost this place automatically. In Uttar Pradesh and Andhra, the PCC Presidents Kamalapati Tripathi and Kakani Venkataratnam had to vacate their positions on joining the State Cabinets. Shankar Dayal Sharma tried to force the President of the Congress, Nijalingappa, to put the official seal on the technical loss of position by the incumbents. It now appears clear that Sharma was playing a game against Nijalingappa by asking the President to approve of these vacatings and yet turning them into issues against Nijalingappa!. In fact, Indira Gandhi and her supporters, including Jagjivan Ram, wrote a letter to Nijalingappa on 8-10-1969, making this an issue. Their argument was that, in the current crisis of the party, it would affect its unity if Subramaniam was removed from the Working Committee by invoking a resolution of the Working Committee passed two decades ago ! Then they demanded to immediately convene meetings of the Working Committee and the AICC to discuss this issue. Pending these meetings, they asked the President to suspend the orders to deprive them of their places in the Working Committee.

The very next day, Nijalingappa sent his reply in which he expressed personal anguish that they had accused him of what he had, in fact, not done at all. He had not written any letter to Subramaniam and therefore Indira Gandhi and her five co-signatories had made allegations without verifying the facts. He said that he had merely acted according to rules. The resolution of the Working Committee passed two decades ago

did not cease to have validity, because it had not been formally revoked. Thus he was upholding the rule of law. He asked the accusers whether they believed in the doctrine of automatic lapse of laws due to the passage of time ! Nijalingappa's training as a lawyer and his genuinely democratic commitment to the rule of law, prompted him to take the position he did. Whatever the legalities and moralities of the issue, it was politicised against Nijalingappa. In her war on the Syndicate, Indira Gandhi employed every resource at her disposal. On 15th October, 1969, she wrote letters to four ministers in her Cabinet, including M.S. Gurupadaswamy and Jagannath Pahadia, who were supposed to be Nijalingappa men, and put pressure on them to resign. Nijalingappa reacted to this with exemplary calmness and said it was the privilege of the PM and that the party could not interfere in the matter. All the time and without let up, Indira Gandhi and her men went round the country to present the Syndicate in the darkest and most negative colours. At the same time, futile efforts to bring Nijalingappa and Indira Gandhi closer also continued. Nijalingappa's close follower-colleague, Veerendra Patil, also tried to intervene but the fact that he was closely associated with Nijalingappa made him suspect in Indira Gandhi's eyes. She began to feel increasingly convinced that the best way to paralyse the Syndicate was to remove Nijalingappa from Congress Presidentship. It would also mean more security for herself. The Subramaniam episode came in handy for her in implementing her strategy. In a long letter dated 28-10-1969, Nijalingappa recapitulated the recent developments since the Bangalore Session of the Congress and asserted strongly that the split in the party was entirely her handiwork. The main points of this important letter may be briefly summarised here. There was no occasion in the history of the Congress when the members of the Working Committee went round spreading false propaganda against the President

in order to coerce him to convene a special session. Even when there were differences in policy or programme in the past, the Working Committee maintained co-operative and friendly relations. Indira Gandhi had abandoned all decency and minimum regard for truth in besmirching his name and heaped unjustified accusation on him. Even three months prior to the Presidential election, he had broached the subject of the party's candidate, but she had responded with silence and indifference. When the official candidate lost, she did not show even the elementary courtesy of a formal regret. In fact, she went round trumpeting that Giri's victory was her victory. Such incidents were unheard of in a democracy. Since the Presidential election, her conduct had been most reprehensible in terms of private and political morality. Her untenable concept of conscience vote led to the victory of a candidate supported by the Communists and Muslim League. Her action had damaged the security and image of the Congress party, and left it incapable of performing its functions. After the Presidential election, the party had passed a unity resolution. But unity was not achieved because disciplined acceptance of the decisions of the party organs did not occur. He was not guilty of any breach of party discipline. She was all the while over-using her governmental powers. She was behaving arbitrarily and absolutely, throwing to the four winds all democratic accountability to the party which had put her in power. She had totally ignored the party, the very source of her authority and office. She had ridden roughshod over all institutional life. She had brought into existence a situation in which norms and discipline became the first casualty. She claimed that she was opposed to factionalism and groupism. She was accusing the so-called Syndicate as a group. But what was, in reality, this Syndicate ? It was a term created by the press to describe the party leaders who chose Shastri in 1965 and Indira Gandhi in 1967 for the position of Prime Minister.

At that time, she did not regard the Syndicate as a reactionary group. She did not consider the group to be an instrument of capitalists. She was now spreading everywhere the false propaganda that the senior leaders were opposed to progressive legislation, especially to bank nationalisation. She went round proclaiming herself as the champion of the poor, but she had never said that this was the policy of the Congress. She had claimed to be the sole person behind bank nationalisation. But she had totally forgotten that long before her, Kamaraj, Chavan and Atulya Ghosh had worked hard to nationalise the banks. She was trying to promote her image as the only leader of progressive and radical forces. But, in truth, her test for progressiveness was simply loyalty to her personally, and the ability to glorify her personality. Her followers had decided to regard all those acting according to democratic norms as reactionaries ! She had systematically removed from office and positions of power everybody who had dared to oppose her personalised style of politics and government.

She had gone round claiming she was opposed to factionalism. Her recent letter to him contained signatures of six members of the Working Committee, and her followers were going round to propagate the doctrine that the Supreme leader was above any institution. Her ministers had the audacity to urge partymen to rebel against persons properly and democratically elected. She adopted a policy of destabilising State Governments which refused to toe her line. She was engineering the electoral defeat of Congressmen with the unholy support of Communists, Muslim League and the DMK. She was prepared to forgive the worst crimes and sins of those promoting the personality cult. Such persons were exempted from payment of income-tax and they were not required to declare their personal assets. Above all, they were not asked

to give account of the party funds they had collected. Nijalingappa defined democracy as collective rule. He told Indira Gandhi that it had pained him to pen the letter, and he had written it only after days of self-doubt and hesitation. He was duty-bound to explain to her his position for her consideration. He considered it his duty to uphold Congress principles of party solidarity and democratic accountability. His letter was not written with any other ulterior intention or motive. He said that she would read it in the spirit in which it was written. He said that it was not still late for her to correct her mistakes and achieve party unity, national welfare and institutional functionality. This letter, though couched in a very polite language, is firm and unyielding on principles. This shows that Nijalingappa, normally an affable, ever-smiling, soft-spoken and almost naive person, could, if the occasion demanded, show his tougher side ! But this does not mean that he was a match for the manipulative politics practised by his opponents. Of course, one has to concede that a politics based on principles and ideals such as the one Nijalingappa believed in, has seldom had a chance in history against a politics based on cunning and craftiness.

The Congress Working Committee was scheduled to meet on 1st November 1969, and before it met Nijalingappa removed Subramaniam and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed from its membership. This action was naturally interpreted as Nijalingappa's response to Indira Gandhi's act of removing his supporters from the Council of Ministers. In the meanwhile, Indira Gandhi and her supporters were furious with Nijalingappa for not calling a meeting of the AICC as requisitioned by the required number of members. They decided to act unilaterally and decided to hold a meeting of the AICC in Delhi on 22nd and 23rd December 1969. But before that, the Working Committee

became split into two wings, one held its meeting in the office of the party under Nijalingappa's Presidentship and the other held its meeting in PM's residence under her Presidentship. Nijalingappa wing resolved against the AICC meeting requisitioned by Indira Gandhi's group, as unnecessary because the Indira Gandhi group could bring a no-confidence motion against Nijalingappa even at the meeting to be hosted by the Gujarat PCC. The Indira wing passed a resolution condemning as invalid the removal of Subramaniam and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed from the Working Committee. They accused the Syndicate of trying to manipulate a majority in the Working Committee by removing the two pro-Indira members. While the meeting of the Indira Gandhi wing went off without a hitch, the meeting of the Nijalingappa wing had to face attempts at disruption by Indira Gandhi supporters who converged on the Congress office. They tried to attack Nijalingappa's car, pulled him out and man-handled him. They hurled obscene words at him, and he had to be rescued and escorted by the police to his office. There were some press reports that these acts of hooliganism were the work of a goonda gang led by a Sardarji, who was for hire. Atulya Ghosh and other senior leaders were also similarly rough-handled by the hired goondas, and the meeting deliberated under police protection. The meeting passed resolutions rejecting Government's policy in domestic politics, economic management and foreign policy. But more importantly, it decided to take disciplinary action against Indira Gandhi and to ask the Parliamentary Congress Party to elect a new leader to replace her. One member K.C. Abraham, first attended the Indira wing's meeting but after a while shifted to the meeting of the Nijalingappa wing. As a result, out of the 21 members in the undivided Working Committee, 11 were in Nijalingappa's wing and ten in Indira Gandhi's wing. The dye was cast and now there was no doubt that the eightyfour-year old Indian

National Congress, which had survived intact after Independence and served as a symbol of nationalism and national unity, was split into two on 1st November 1969, unquestionably the darkest day in its history. Since the Congress was a resource, Indira Gandhi tried to take control of it. Her words and deeds made it clear that she was in no mood to strike a compromise with the Syndicate. She tried to capitalise on the rumour that the Syndicate was planning to remove her from office. As most observers of the situation have noted, the Syndicate did not possess the resources to fight the PM effectively, and perhaps its leaders, still clinging to old traditions, were not prepared to go down to Indira Gandhi's level in fighting !

Not receiving a reply to his earlier letter, Nijalingappa wrote to the PM another letter dated 3-11-1969. A brief summary of this letter may be given here. In it, he reminded her of his earlier letter in which he had criticised her style of functioning as posing a danger to Congress unity and democracy. In that letter, he had also advised her to give up the path of crookedness and intrigue, and adopt a policy of openness and transparency and fairness. He was pained that she did not have the elementary courtesy of answering his letter. She did not seem to have time to meet him. She had boycotted the properly constituted and legal Working Committee to lead a few of its members. Not only that, she had held a parallel meeting against the legal Committee. She had resolved in the parallel meeting to declare some of his decisions as unconstitutional, that there would be a special meeting of the AICC on 22nd and 23rd December 1969, whose purpose was to remove him from Presidentship of the party. All this information he got through the newspapers. He bluntly called her actions unpardonable. Violation of the party constitution was a crime and it tended to weaken the party unity. He expressed

the fear that her action would lead to dangerous and harmful consequences. He said it was upto the Congressmen to decide who was responsible for the threat to the unity, ideals and principles of the great institution. Congressmen were also accountable to the public. He said he was releasing to the press his earlier letter of 28th October 1969 so that public would judge the situation in the right perspective. Indira Gandhi's reply to this letter can be summarised briefly as follows. She explained the delay in replying to the earlier letter as due to the time needed to think over the many issues raised in it. While Nijalingappa wanted to avoid split in the party, and to promote democracy and socialism as the goals of the party in order to strengthen it, his decision to remove Subramaniam and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, however, told a different story. He had no right to take such action according to the party constitution. In her reading of the party constitution, the President could remove those office-bearers whom he did not approve of, but he had no right to touch the members of the Working Committee before their two-year term. Hence, he had clearly acted in violation of the constitution of the party. She asked the question whether the Congress President did not have the right to remove his own nominees from membership in the same way as the PM could remove from her Ministerial Council members she had herself appointed. Indira Gandhi did not regard this question a valid one, because the PM's powers and functions were clearly stated in the Indian Constitution and the party President's powers were clearly stated in the party constitution. Therefore, one should not compare the office of the party President and the PM on an equal footing. Making a fine distinction, she argued that the President was within his powers to remove Shankar Dayal Sharma from General Secretaryship but not from the membership of the Working Committee ! She accused Nijalingappa was violating the party constitution to

promote his personal intentions. She had hesitated to reply earlier because she thought it was futile to argue with him ! She was now replying because he had released his letter to the press.

On the issue of the presidential election, she said that enough discussion had already taken place. In any case, it was now closed chapter. In order to arrive at a consensus on the candidate, she had asked the President to give a list of candidates. But instead of the list, a decision was taken unfortunately at the Parliamentary Party meeting in Bangalore without much discussion. It was also taken too hastily. This was the prelude to all the subsequent problems. The decision on the Presidential candidate taken in that manner showed a lack of political maturity. In fact, Giri stood as an Independent candidate, and he was backed by the Communist Party and the Muslim League. He also got the support of many other groups. She and her colleagues had nothing to do with his victory ! She assured him and the party that she had no motives of personal gain. She was keen that the Congress should be strong, united, and committed to socialism and secularism. She wanted him to join her in the fight against the forces that opposed these ideals. In fact, this was precisely why many Congressmen were asking for a special session of the AICC. It was the duty of the party leaders to respect such a demand. Those who could not promote the ideals of the party could not qualify as democrats. They could not be regarded as capable of protecting the unity of the party organization.

She urged Nijalingappa to view her words against the background of current situation. The crisis facing the Congress was also the crisis facing the nation. The developmental goals placed before the people raised new challenges. She asserted

that there was a wide gulf between the programmes approved at the Faridabad Session and the ideas mooted in his Presidential address. The Bangalore Session further widened this rift. All these problems and issues could have been tackled properly only on the basis of the notes she had jotted down. But unfortunately, Morarji who claimed to move a resolution based on her notes, was in his speech, clearly opposed to her suggestions. The efforts to implement the accepted policy of the party with regard to Bank Nationalisation, had already vitiated the atmosphere. But these progressive measures were impossible to be prevented. Their implementation was not merely the responsibility of the Government. It could succeed only on the basis of co-operation between the leadership of the party and the Government. If the present crisis was not resolved, great harm would ensue for the country. Therefore, in the interest of democracy, it was best to place all these issues and problems before the AICC. She appealed to the President respectfully to set aside technicalities, and preside over the AICC they had planned to convene, and provide opportunity for members to express their views. Final decisions could be taken on the basis of the majority. She urged Nijalingappa to forget personal differences and work according to the resolutions of the party. If he thought that the mode of calling the AICC was technically improper, she entreated him to call the meeting himself ! Some three or four days after she wrote this letter, she published an open letter to the partymen which explained the developments. In it, she said that the party, just as the country, was facing a crisis. This could not be solely attributed to the rift between the Parliament and the party. The more important reason was the basic differences over the goals and policies of the Congress. Within the Congress, there was, on the one side, a group committed to socialism, social transformation, inner democracy and open discussion. Opposed to it stood another group which supported the statusquo,

traditionalism and decision-making without proper debate. The second group spoke the rhetoric of change, but when it came to the question of implementation, it retreated and came in the way of the revolutionary programmes and schemes of the Congress. She said that the emergence of such a group was nothing new. In fact, it was there in existence for the last twentytwo years. This group systematically opposed her father's attempts to initiate effective social transformation. The Congress fashioned by her father and Mahatma Gandhi alone could be an effective instrument of social transformation. In fact, they had assumed the task of governance only to bring about a non-violent social revolution. If this could not be done, what was the use of the Congress ? After the attainment of Independence, the senior leaders were preoccupied with administrative responsibility, and the others became a vested interest. Forgetting that they were servants of the people, these Congressmen went round as if they were the Congress. To strengthen their position within the party, they drove out of the party honest and committed workers. Fed up with their greed for power and office, many good Congressmen resigned from the party and retired from politics. Not only that, the vested interest prevented the rejuvenation of the party through the new blood of the youth. They recruited into the party false members, and with their help acquired power over the party with the eventual objective of deflecting from the policies of the Government in the direction they desired. The AICC that she and her friends had called was meant to be a forum where these problems could be discussed openly and freely. She emphasised that it was her strong desire that the great national institution which had brought freedom to the country and which has promised the creation of a new social order, should not split. That was why she was producing as annexures to her open letter the correspondence between her and Nijalingappa, and

between Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Subramaniam and Nijalingappa. This correspondence showed that the Working Committee had disregarded the opinion of the majority of Congressmen without any proper discussion.

Then she referred to the confabulations between some Chief Ministers. Even as they were deliberating, Nijalingappa demanded an explanation of her conduct. Even after this, she had met him. She discussed with him the suggestions made by K.C. Abraham and Veerendra Patil. She said that she had great regard for Nijalingappa's personal qualities. Since the AICC meeting they had proposed was to deal with only one issue, the issue of Presidential election, Nijalingappa interpreted this as an attempt to express no confidence in him. She had suggested that all offices above the PCC level should be filled up by elections, and that the elections should be preceded by a revision of the list of voters. But Nijalingappa suggested that the elections should be held on the basis of existing list of voters. But even about this he was not firm. He merely said that if a written request to this effect was made, he would place it before the Working Committee. He did not make it clear whether this issue would be considered by the full Working Committee or the truncated one. Neither Nijalingappa nor she raised the issue of the letter asking her to explain her conduct. She learnt about his intention to take disciplinary action against her and others only through reliable sources. But she said that they should forget these trivial matters and think of the grave crisis facing the country. They had to turn their attention towards popular frustrations and new popular aspirations, the dreams and hopes of the people. She claimed that popular political consciousness was growing. It was necessary to work out programmes taking into account their present and future needs. The Congress had to open its doors to the new winds of change.

They had to develop contacts with new groups, and youth power had to be specially nurtured. There was need to reap the full benefits of technological and scientific knowledge and expertise. The intellectuals had to be associated with policies and programmes. Attempts should be made to create confidence in all sections of the people. There should be a national debate on these matters.

She argued that the present conflict between groups had two sources. One pertained to law and another to constitution. The correspondence between Nijalingappa and herself had discussed them fully. No doubt, these issues were real. But there was a problem far more important than these matters. The question was: Should Congressmen who had built-up the Congress through great sacrifice shape the direction and policies of the party or should a few leaders exercising feudal control over the party shape it according to their personal whims and fancies ? This conflict between authoritarian control and genuine democracy was always there but now it had developed into a crisis. The goal of the Congress was to bring about a social revolution through socio-economic change. But, the party had currently lost its ability to implement its own goal. It no longer commanded the mighty voice, the ability to act and the self-confidence it once had. The ordinary Congressmen had no right to speak and various party organs at different levels were no longer functioning. But whatever be the present conflict, what was more important was the question of what the Congress could do for the people. The party had to do this on the basis of its commitment to democracy and socialism. Both were equally important and complementary. Only the ideologically broad-based Congress could achieve an integration of the two. People are required to be oriented towards socialism, and socialism was not merely a matter of legislation. It was not

enough for the Congress to be alive only during the elections. It had to work ceaselessly to keep alive in the minds of the people the goals of the Congress. Massive political education programme was necessary. A powerful social force had to be created to support their political capabilities. Even elections could not be fought without the back-up of such a social power.

She agreed that Government was an organ of the Congress party as an institution. If the party was alive and functional, then the Government would be alive to its responsibilities. The health and strength of the party were reflected in the legislatures and the activities of the Government. Therefore, the importance of the party could not be underestimated. The proposed Delhi Session of the AICC was meant precisely to activise the party, and make it an effective instrument of dynamic and democratic action. She was hopeful that this Session would inject new life into the party and help it move in a progressive direction, taking the people along with it. This was the only issue before all, and everything else did not count.

This open letter shows Indira Gandhi's intelligence and political skill. It is difficult to disgrace with some of her key statements in this letter. Some of them must be admitted as factually true. For instance, the recent political debacles of the Congress in 1967 elections had clearly shown that the party was in need of rejuvenation and face-lift. It also needed organizational streamlining and, above all, it needed the strength and zeal of new blood. All this was true, and perhaps Nijalingappa, while picking issues with some points, would go along with some of them. However, there would still be fundamental differences between the two. Nijalingappa, steeped in traditional legalistic culture, was strongly committed to the rule of law, especially the letter of the law. Indira Gandhi, on

the other hand, was prepared to abandon the rule of law in the interest of what she regarded as the spirit of the law. Moreover, she was, at least in theory, ready to abandon legality in the interest of ideology. This was something that was against the basic position of Nijalingappa. The second point, perhaps never easy to resolve beyond doubt, is Indira Gandhi's sincerity in her claims and professions. One has to question, as Nijalingappa did, whether her radicalism, socialism and progressivism, merely rhetorical weapons to promote her personal political advantage? Nijalingappa and the Syndicate believed sincerely that she was essentially an opportunist and her profession differed from her practice. In plain language, they regarded her as a cunning, crooked and untrustworthy person. This is a ticklish historical question because in historical analysis, one often finds that personal and impersonal motives, opportunistic and ideological aspirations, tend to get mixed up inextricably. But this is a general historical observation and is not made here to justify or exonerate Indira Gandhi's politics. As subsequent events showed, the Syndicate was, in fact, out of tune with the spirit of the time, and Indira Gandhi, whatever her ulterior motives, was able to capture it better than the old guard.

To resume the narration of events, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed who had been removed from the Working Committee on the ground that he had worked against the official Congress candidate in the Presidential election, prior to the Unity resolution of the Working Committee which called upon both sides to forget the past, now addressed a letter to Nijalingappa on 1st November 1969, asserting that his removal was unjust and that he continued to be a member. Nijalingappa, as the party President wrote to the PM, accusing her of convening an illegal meeting of the Working Committee and asking her

for an explanation of her conduct. The PM responded to it by asking Nijalingappa to convene immediately the AICC and prove his majority. The PM also removed from her Ministry Ram Subhag Singh for supporting resolutions against her in the Working Committee meeting chaired by Nijalingappa. The atmosphere became thick with confusing rumours, including the rumour that the Parliament would be dissolved and fresh elections called, circulated by the Indira Gandhi group. Naturally, the rumour worried the members of the Parliament, and they went over to Indira Gandhi side to avoid fresh elections. The most disturbed were those legislators and leaders trying to sit on the fence ! Amidst all this, efforts to avert the split continued, though in a low key. Veerendra Patil, for instance, engaged himself in the conciliatory process, hoping to avoid the split. In fact, earlier during the parliamentary meeting which proposed Sanjeeva Reddy's candidature for Presidentship, he had advised discussions with the PM before taking a final decision. When Patil met her in Delhi, she is reported to have said that she was then facing the very question of her political survival. She had argued that the PM who had to run the Government must have a final say in the choice of a President because she had to work as the PM in close collaboration with the man in the Rashtrapatibhavan. She is reported to have told further that, if Nijalingappa stood as a candidate instead of Reddy, she could gladly support him! In fact, Patil welcomed the idea as it would prevent the split, and broached it with his mentor, Nijalingappa. But Nijalingappa took an old-fashioned moral stance, and considered at that stage it was immoral and improper to elbow Reddy out. Moreover, Nijalingappa felt that it would amount to a betrayal of a friend. He was ready to give up power and office in the interest of moral principles. Anyway, in the post-presidential election situation, Patil resumed his task as an emissary of peace. He

met both the leaders and tried to persuade them to patch up their differences in the interest of the party. He persuaded Nijalingappa to meet the PM again at a dinner which she would host, to save the situation on the basis of a mutually acceptable compromise. The dinner went off well, but the process of mutual accommodation did not. Neither was ready to yield an inch of the disputed terrain. Nijalingappa invited her for dinner at his residence. She agreed but, in the last minute, avoided it on the ground of pressure of work. Patil thought that this development was due to the advice preferred by her Communist supporters or close friends. There were many behind-the-scene-efforts to avert the split. One such involved Indira Gandhi's confidant, Dinesh Singh. He invited M. Rajasekharan, a member of the Lok Sabha from Mysore and tried to use him as a go-between because he was Nijalingappa's son-in-law. He told him that at present the country was going through a very critical time and that persons like him should be as active as quick-silver ! The first thing to be done was to prevent the split in the party, and that, if he wished, he could help in preventing it. He conveyed the message that Indira Gandhi did not like Morarji and that if Nijalingappa left his company, the PM was prepared to make Nijalingappa the Finance Minister with the status of a Deputy PM. But the son-in-law knew his father-in-law too well to see any point in intervening in the matter. He is reported to have replied that Nijalingappa was a man who would never go back on a promise given but yet he would try to pass on the suggestion. Even as Rajasekharan opened the subject, Nijalingappa was furious and asked the son-in-law what was his reply to Dinesh Singh. After hearing the details of the meeting with Dinesh Singh, Nijalingappa was somewhat mollified. In fact, a similar gesture had been made earlier to Rajasekharan by Dinesh Singh during the Presidential election. Nijalingappa had then argued that it was not proper on his part

to aspire for the Presidentship of the country because he was a party President. He said that his job was to choose a candidate for the position and therefore he could not possibly choose himself as a candidate ! It is believed that Dinesh Singh had discussed the issue of Deputy PM with Veerendra Patil and that he had even met Nijalingappa and suggested the idea to him. It was after she realised the futility of tempting Nijalingappa with her offers that the PM published her open letter. Nijalingappa sent his reply to PM's letter of 3-11-1969 on 11-11-1969. The main point of this letter may be briefly recapitulated here. First, he expressed disappointment that the PM did not show sufficient concern about the plight of the party. She had not shown any signs of realising her wrong path and attempted a retreat from it. Instead of removing the doubts and suspicions entertained by him and his associates, she had taken umbrage in half-truths and dubious arguments to avoid facing the real issues. He thought that Indira Gandhi was trying to cover up the gap between truth and speculation by deploying lies. He asserted that he had not removed Subramaniam from membership of the Working Committee, and that he had forfeited his membership by his own act of resigning from the PCC. The other person had lost the membership by not attending the Working Committee meeting and betraying it. In the entire history of the party, no member of the Working Committee had abused the President as Sadiq Ali had done. Such lack of party discipline and betrayal had to be punished with severe penalty. He asked her whether it was not part of Congress norm that any person who became a minister could not hold the office of President or Secretary of a PCC. As per this norm, Kamalapati Tripathi, Venkataratnam and A.P. Sharma, were disqualified from holding any party office. The party earlier had enforced this norm. He had not behaved as her friends had done even after the Unity resolution. For instance, the statement made

by Jagjivan Ram in Patna or her criticism of Bombay Congress or Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed's press statements, were proof of their violating the spirit of the Unity resolution. Nijalingappa rebutted her claim that he had not made up his mind about the Presidential candidate at the time of choosing the party nominee. He reminded her that he had raised this issue with her in May, June and July, 1969. But every time, it was she who had refused to discuss the matter. It was not till two hours before the starting of the Parliamentary Party meeting in Bangalore that she made her mind clear on it. She had not taken her own party into confidence, and conduct negotiations with the opposition parties over it. He challenged her to swear on oath that she had not worked for Giri's election. As for her contention that the refusal to accede to the requisition of some members for a Session of the AICC, was unconstitutional, Nijalingappa pointed out that the Congress President was elected by the representatives of all members of the party, and not by the AICC. He asked her how they had collected the signatures for the requisition. It was done through misuse of official power, threats, and deceit. Even if all the signatures were perfect, it still would raise the question whether one branch of an organization could usurp the powers of another branch. She had asked him what he had done about the riots in Ahmedabad and agitations in Assam, Telangana and Chandigarh. But was not this due to the failure of her own administration ? Perhaps, she thought that such agitations would keep her in power ! She could not be unaware of Morarji's role in the Ahmedabad communal riots. He accused her of using arguments of principles and ideology to cover up her acts of indiscipline. He claimed that his Faridabad address was not opposed to the ideals and objectives of the party. He asserted that he was second to none in implementing the socialistic objectives. He had demonstrated this as a Congressman and Chief Minister of Mysore. He questioned her

assumption that mere expansion of public sector, without any attention to its efficiency and productivity, was socialism. Even on the issue of Bank Nationalisation, Morarji was on record that he would support it if necessary. Therefore, Nijalingappa was compelled to conclude that her sole goal was to assume the absolute power of a dictator. In fact, in the twentieth century, every dictator wore the mask of socialism ! As for her charge that S.K. Patil had not produced proper accounts about funds collected, Patil himself had already answered her. He had produced the accounts to the party and before the Bombay High Court. Turning the tables against her, he asked whether she and her friends had produced proper accounts of party funds collected by them. After all, there was a party resolution that ministers should produce accounts of the funds they collected. She must have been aware that ministers and legislators had obligation to declare openly their assets to the party office. He asked whether they had observed these norms and party decisions. He accused her of making light of his charges against her of personality cult and dictatorship. He pointed out to her that it was the tragedy of the country that democratic institutions and processes were misused to acquire dictatorial powers and destroy democracy. Through bribery and violence, opposition had been silenced. Propaganda was mounted to legitimise such dictatorial powers, using sycophants. He asserted that it was the duty of the Congress to fight such behaviour in order to promote genuine socialism and democracy.

These letters between the two left one in no doubt that the differences were too fundamental to be reconciled. On 11th and 12th November 1969, the Organization Congress Working Committee met to examine the three draft resolutions prepared by Morarji, Sadiq Ali and S.K. Patil as well as four compromise formulas prepared by Chief Ministers. Nijalingappa did not

accept the compromise formulas that the charges against Indira Gandhi and others should be withdrawn. He considered it to be amounting to an approval of her indiscipline and open rebellion against the party. On the ground that the PM's conduct harmed the party and the nation, that in the post-Presidential election period party indiscipline was escalating, that the PM and her followers were violating the letter and spirit of the Unity resolution, that the cause of compromise had suffered because of the signature campaign against the president, that she was trying to concentrate all power in her hands and thus she was pushing the country towards the brink of disaster, the Committee felt it necessary, however regretful, to remove the PM from the primary membership of the party. As a consequence, technically she lost her position as the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party. The Working Committee asked the Parliamentary Party to elect another leader as soon as possible. Pro-Indira Gandhi crowd converged on the Congress office, demanding the rescinding of her expulsion. Perhaps mostly hired groups, they surrounded the President to press their demand. Nijalingappa had to put up with all this. On 12th November 1969, Indira Gandhi, exploiting the situation, convened a meeting of her new Working Committee. The meeting examined the resolutions of the other Working Committee, and proclaimed that the removal of the PM from primary membership was unconstitutional and it indicated irresponsibility. It regarded PM as a properly elected leader of the Parliamentary Party and she represented the whole nation, and, therefore, a handful of partymen could not remove her. They could have taken the decision after gaining the support of the majority in the AICC meeting they had asked for. Nijalingappa group had acted in violation of party constitution. Indira Gandhi could be removed from office only by the Parliamentary Party, and that she symbolised the hopes and aspirations of the entire country. It was sheer audacity on

the part of the Syndicate to have tried to remove a democratically elected leader of the people. In fact, the handful of old leaders were exercising dictatorship, and their behaviour was nothing short of Fascist ! That was why the meeting that they had called on 22nd and 23rd November 1969 in Delhi was a crucial one, and all Congressmen should make it a point to attend it. The resolution was unanimously passed.

On 13th November 1969, the Congress Parliamentary Party met in the Central Hall of the Parliament House, under Indira Gandhi's Presidentship. It was specifically called to re-affirm faith in the PM. Around the same time, some 60 to 70 members of Nijalingappa Congress met at Morarji's residence to decide on the successor to Indira Gandhi ! Ram Subhag Singh was elected by them as the leader of the party in the Parliament. Nijalingappa addressed a letter to all Congressmen, asking them not to attend the 22nd November meeting in Delhi called by the Indira Gandhi group. He told them that this meeting was called by people who were out to destroy the party. He reminded them that they were forced to expel her from primary membership because of her dictatorial conduct. He pointed out that Bank Nationalisation which she had claimed as her idea, was there with the Congress right from 1947. The Congress had already made nationalisation a part of its policy. Moreover, he asked them to consider whether Bank Nationalisation had helped reduce poverty. He called shameless her claim that she alone was a socialist. Because of her undemocratic conduct and her attempt to concentrate all power in her own hands, the Congress was facing the worst crisis in its long history. He concluded by appealing to them to boycott the illegal meeting of 22nd November 1969. Indira Gandhi appealed to all those who had left the party for whatever reasons earlier to return to its fold. The appeal attracted those in the other parties to

jump into the band-wagon. Indira Gandhi, in the meanwhile, adopted the populistic and demogaggic strategy of collecting mobs near her house and then lecturing to them on elimination of poverty and socialism, individual liberty, democracy and other high -sounding slogans. The new Parliamentary Congress Party which came into existence on 16th November 1969 was not enough to give Indira Gandhi a majority. Thus, she was forced to seek the support of opposition groups and even tried to woo rulers as well as Independent legislators. The Communists and the DMK offered her their support. The 52-member Nijalingappa Congress MPs began to sit in the Parliament as an opposition. Its leader was Ram Subhag Singh. The split in the party which started in Delhi soon percolated to the States. As a result, there emerged political polarisation, uncertainty and instability. The two factions of the Congress engaged in a relentless war against each other.

The Congress Session of 22nd November 1969 turned into a gala and spectacular occasion. It was a very impressive display of pomp, power and popularity, and was calculated to create fear in the hearts of PM's political enemies, especially the Syndicate. C. Subramaniam was made the temporary President. T.T. Krishnamachari who unfurled the national flag declared that Indira Gandhi's expulsion from the party was a grievous blow to democracy. He also re-affirmed the dynastic rule by proclaiming that the Congress would be impoverished by the absence of representatives of the Nehru family! In her address, Indira Gandhi declared that the doors of their party were open to all those willing to accept their ideals and programmes. She also expressed regret that some of her colleagues were engaged in splitting the party. The presence of the mammoth crowd of partymen there, was proof that their party was committed genuinely to the principles and objectives of the Congress party.

She said that they should all go back from the Session with the determination to sacrifice everything for the welfare of the nation and the unity of the party. Their goal was promotion of the interest of the party and the welfare of the people. She wanted her audience to shed anger and other emotions, and affirm in a calm atmosphere their commitment to the service of the nation. They should regard the party as above the individual, and shun all groupism. The Government should own the responsibility for not implementing fully the Congress policies and programmes. That failure was due to the fact that there were in the Government persons opposed to those policies and programmes. This was obviously a snipe at Morarji. She said that any organization that did not offer its members full opportunity to express their views was as good as dead. She called on them to remember the advice of Gandhiji and Nehru that implementation of the goal was as important as the goal. Those unable to meet the new challenges would lose their positions in the high offices of the party. A master demogogue, she deliberately broke down without completing the statement which began mentioning Nijalingappa and his colleagues, mumbled for words and wiped the tears from her eyes! Her voice trembling, she completed the statement that she had been expelled from the Congress. Displaying great oratorial skill, she proceeded to tell her audience that Krishnamachari had already declared that none could expel her. Nobody could come in the way of the path she was treading. They might be in the Government or out of it, but the main thing was the goal. They should always strive to realise it. If they had that determination and along with it courage and conviction, then only they could infuse the Congress with new life and new light so that it could successfully face new challenges. The party could then be given a new birth. She warned that, in the name of unity, they should not close the doors of the Congress. They

should avoid wasting their energy in small fights. Their doors should be always open to unity, friendship, comradeship, ideals and goals. Yet, they would have to close the doors to those who were bent on opposing their goals and objectives. No matter who they were. Those who subscribed to their goals and programmes were always welcome. Some had accused her of trying to become a Communist. How could she refuse the support of Communists or Socialists? It was their privilege to support her or not support her. She declared that she was against the communist path of violence. On the second day of the Session, she elaborated her economic policy. She said it was always progressive and its main goal was war on poverty. She wanted to give everyone equality of opportunity by preventing the wealthy from becoming wealthier. They aimed to help the backward to become more advanced. The whole purpose of Bank Nationalisation was to free the poor from the clutches of money-lenders. The banks should increase the productive capacity of farmers and small-scale manufacturers by extending to them credit facilities. This would also help solve the unemployment problem. If the land reforms were not implemented soon, it would lead to class conflict. The health and nutrition of children was another issue on which they would focus their attention. Tax-evasion was another problem which had to be solved. In short, socialism was to be established within the frame-work of political democracy. This meant that the public sector had to be expanded. Economic progress was to be achieved through a co-ordination of public sector, private sector and the governmental sector. The workers must be guaranteed minimum wages. The Harijans should be provided scope for rapid development. The Session passed an economic resolution based on these assumptions and commitments.

On the same day, the Indira Gandhi Congress Working Committee expelled from the Committee Nijalingappa and other

eleven of his followers, and restored Indira Gandhi's primary membership. All this was justified on the ground that they wanted to save democracy from dictatorial absolutism! Yet things were not all smooth, and some difficulties arose over the election of members to the new Working Committee. Members chosen by Subramaniam, a confidant of the PM, were elected. The inclusion of some younger persons and ex-communists created some discontent among senior leaders, who had been denied place on the Committee. The new Indira Congress replicated more or less the old patterns of communalism, regionalism and opportunism which had characterised the old Congress. Nijalingappa countered this by proclaiming that he represented the original Congress and that the new break-away group was not competent legally to expel them. The two rival camps started to fight each other. The Congress organization was not only split; it was reduced virtually to a chaos. Overnight records were shifted from the old office to the office of the new Congress. Some employees got arrested allegedly for breach of peace. The old leaders sought police protection. All these were the result of the aggressive behaviour of Indira Congressmen. The new Congress did not hesitate to indulge in violence to seek control of the old Congress office. As previously decided, the old Congress Organization Congress held its session in Ahmedabad from 19 to 22 December 1969. Its estimated attendance was around twentyfive thousand. The leaders felt encouraged that some four hundred AICC members were present. Nijalingappa set the tone for the meeting by attacking with arguments of Indira Gandh's dictatorial conduct, wily ways and craze for personality cult. The other leaders accused her of being a tool in the hands of communalists and Communists! Nijalingappa referred in his address to the delay in taking disciplinary action against her in the interest of the party unity, enshrined in the Unity resolution

of 25 August 1969. But on the night of 25th, he said, he could not sleep the whole night, tortured by the feeling that he had sacrificed party discipline for party unity. He admired ironically PM's skill in propaganda, and said sarcastically that even Goebells could learn from it! He thought that she was becoming pro-Soviet in order to gain the support of Communists. He said he was specially pained that the Congress was being split in the Centenary year of Gandhiji's birth. He blamed Indira Gandhi as the sole cause of the split. She had asked for an AICC meeting for the sole purpose of removing him from presidentship. But he told his audience that he had never felt any fascination for such offices. He was now before them because they had invited him. He could not say no to the requests of his friends. He could not tolerate the open indiscipline and the efforts to usurp the authority that belonged to others. In his presidential address, Nijalingappa covered a whole gamut of issues public versus private sector, scientific research, co-operatives, agro-industry, development of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, non-alignment, socio-economic transformation, land reforms, war on illiteracy, family-planning, protection of democracy, and socialism. He appealed to them to carry on the Congress revolution in the rural areas.

Soon after the Organization Congress meeting, the new Congress or, as it came to be soon designated, Indira Congress, had its AICC Session in Bombay from 26 to 29 December 1969. It was presided over by Jagjivan Ram. Indira Gandhi provided the main themes in her address, and they included the need to make policies reflect the new aspirations and hopes of the people, and that great vigilance had to be exercised over the enemies of progress. The leaders who followed her adopted a cool tone and pleaded for the cause of social justice. They declared that their policy was a balanced one in which those

below would be uplifted without pushing those above down. Indira Gandhi assured the audience that laws would be made to embody this policy of social justice. Denying that her policy was pro-communist, she declared that her foreign policy would be dynamic and responsive to the changing international environment. She justified the infiltration of ex-communists into the party by saying that there was nothing wrong in such socialists joining the party. In his presidential address, Jagjivan Ram proclaimed that the Bombay Session inaugurated a new era in nation's history. But all this facade concealed behind-the-scene struggles between the young Turks and the elders or between the leftist and rightist groups, and the high-handed fashion in which Indira Gandhi tried to quell these internal squabbles. The new Congress was obviously displaying a new organizational culture. Of course, it became clear soon that these slogans remained slogans and no serious implementation followed in the days that followed.

This account of the split, largely factual and historical, should conclude with some general and analytical comments. In the first place, it should be noted that this was not the first time that the party had experienced a split. Splits had occurred earlier in the long history of the party. In 1907, there was a sharp conflict between those who wanted greater change in policy and those wanted to go slow, centred on the figure of Tilak. In 1922, the Swaraj party broke away from the Congress on the issue of participation in the elections under the new constitutional reforms. But later the Swaraj group returned to the parent organization after negotiations between Gandhiji, Chittaranjan Das and Motilal Nehru. In 1939, during the election of Subhash Chandra Bose as Congress President, the party was very nearly on the brink of a split. In 1951, the differences between Nehru and Tandon also created a

situation potentially capable of a split. Also it is well-known that the various ideologically incompatible groups which had been brought under the single umbrella of freedom struggle broke away from the Congress-first the Communists and later the Socialists. Yet, this split was different from the earlier ones in quality because this one, split the party vertically at all levels and brought into existence two ideologically polarised political structures. Viewed in this perspective, Nijalingappa can be seen as offering the most successful challenge to the dominant ideologies in the party such as dynastic rule, authoritarianism and institutional mal-functioning. It is also an irony of history that this achievement was accomplished by a person known for his gentle and mild disposition, balanced mental frame-work, and love for peace. Nijalingappa was able to do this because of his total commitment to certain values and principles, which he had imbibed from his biographical background of his family, his regional culture and religious convictions. Above all, his natural aversion to power and office, and his natural self-effacement proved to be his strong weapons against the political skill and craftiness of an opponent like Indira Gandhi. But even in her case, he would have good words to say inspite of his overall judgement which is negative. Secondly, what sense can one make of this momentous event in the history of post-colonial India? At one level, it can be seen, and rightly seen, as a conflict between personal ambition and political morality. Indira Gandhi represented personal ambition, and her motives were beyond doubt geared to power and office. Nijalingappa represented liberal democratic values, crystallised in the party inspite of the complications introduced by the Gandhian culture of liberalism. In this interpretation, Nijalingappa emerged certainly as the champion of an ideology and a political culture cohering around a liberalism re-fashioned by Gandhian swadeshi culture and Nehru's Fabian socialism. Indira Gandhi may be

said to represent ideologically an excessive emphasis on the socialist component in the Congress ideological mixture of socialism and liberal democracy. In a way, she was continuing the low key battle her father had been waging against those aspects of liberalism which he considered obstructive to his socialism. At another level, the conflict can be seen as one to his ideas of socialism. At another level it can be interpreted as a conflict centred round inter-generational differences. In fact, it involved three generations-Nijalingappa generation, Indira generation and the generation born after the attainment of freedom. Indira Gandhi was perhaps best qualified to mediate between her father's generation and the generation of what Rushdie has called Midnight's Children. Here, what was important was not specific issues but such intractable elements as style, cultural ethos, and value transformations. She was able to capture better the new values of self-orientation, a certain cynical disregard for idealism and sheer opportunism which had characterised the post-1947 Congress party. For the in-between generation, it was a traumatic experience to see erstwhile noble and ideal figures running after power and office as well as material prosperity. Lastly, from a long range historical perspective, the conflict may be seen as part of a process in which colonial nationalist movements had to undergo the painful process of being transformed into electoral political parties. This process involved inevitably a loss of idealism and perceptible orientation towards the goal of power-acquisition. This happened to the Muslim League in Pakistan very soon after Independence but the Indian National Congress, perhaps because of its history of accommodation and absorption of diversities, underwent this transformation somewhat later. It was also due to the fact that Nehru's personal and political charisma delayed the development, and it was left to his daughter Indira Gandhi to initiate and herself represent the process. Paradoxically, at yet another

level, it was also a process of what may be called re-idealisation. The Young Turks, for instance, were clearly ideological creatures. All in all, the split was a momentous development in the political history of post-colonial India and constituted a water-shed. In many ways, what appear to be our current political travails in the 1990s such as criminalisation of politics, break-down of liberal institutions and near collapse of democratic values, are the culmination of the historical process set in motion by the great Congress Split. But this analytical interpretation should not be used to absolve Indira Gandhi's personal political crimes nor ignore Nijalingappa's personal and political virtues. We can conclude this discussion with a speculative question: Could the split have been averted? Like all historical questions, it admits of more than one answer. Certainly, it could have been averted if the dramatist personae involved had been different. In this respect, Nijalingappa's personal and political qualities as well as his values were such that the split was inevitable. If he had been more flexible ideologically or morally, it would have been possible to compromise opportunistically with Indira Gandhi, and thus avoid the split. In fact, a further irony, in retrospect, is that she was prepared to accept Nijalingappa, and that her real targets were Morarji and others. But Nijalingappa was playing a different kind of politics, and it rejected compromise on such basic values as liberal democracy, institutional discipline and rule of law. If Indira Gandhi had been other than she was, that is, a politician prepared to subordinate personal interest to the interest of the party or the nation, the split could certainly have been averted. Given Nijalingappa as the party President and Indira Gandhi as the PM, the situation had the elements of a Greek tragedy, a situational logic relentlessly working towards a structural break-down. There is one more question that needs to be asked finally. Was Nijalingappa a successful

party President ? If the criterion is the simple one of survival of the party, then he would be assessed as a failure as a President, because he presided over its disintegration. This position would presuppose that no cost was too high for the maintenance of party unity and survival. Here, it would be easy to blame Nijalingappa, but the story we have narrated shows that he was ready to pay a fairly high price for achieving unity. But as a President he felt that the actual price asked was nothing short of the total abandonment of all the values cherished by the party during its long history. It was a classical Hobson's choice. Who can say that he was not right in doing what he did ? His other friends in the Syndicate, with the exception of Kamaraj, would have most likely taken the option he rejected, and joined hands with the PM to forge a party that had gone back on its own history and tradition. Properly interpreted, Nijalingappa should be seen as a tragic hero, without worrying about the secondary question of whether he was a success or a failure as a party President. It is worth reminding ourselves in this context that no earlier President in the history of the party had been called upon to face a crisis of such monstrous proportion and complexity. It can be scarcely disputed that he emerged out of such an impossible historical situation as a good man and a great statesman.

Right from the start, Nijalingappa was reluctant to move into national level politics, whether in the party organization or the Government. He became the President of the party much against his will and, as some might say, his better judgement. When the party he was heading was caught up in a serious crisis, he was in the beginning inclined to resign from the post and even retire from politics. But he realised that this would amount to running away from responsibility. He was also too much of an idealist not to give up the hope that he could cleanse

the party of its major ills such as corruption, indiscipline and injustices. He was certainly not motivated by any love of office or power. But he was no match for Indira Gandhi's new political style. She successfully managed to attract members towards her Congress, which she regarded virtually as her private property. The central organizational principle governing the new Congress was loyalty to the person of the one supreme leader. Thus Nijalingappa found himself left with a party substantially shrunk in numbers and weakened in resources. Characteristically, he did not lose heart, and set about trying to re-build and strengthen the old Congress. To highlight and publicise the shortcomings and deficiencies of Indira Congress, he undertook an all-India tour. He never stayed for more than two to three days in the towns and cities he visited across the country. He felt happy and encouraged wherever he went to find enthusiastic reception and festive welcome. Often he was taken in a ceremonial procession from the airport, his vehicle covered with garlands and bands accompanying the entourage. Everywhere, it was the same message he propagated, and it was that the country could be saved from the current plight only by following the path chalked out by Gandhiji. His speeches combined a sharp critique of the current Government, Gandhian advice, and appeal for party discipline. He spent hours with the visiting people, and usually his meetings with public extended late into the midnight. He had twin goals in making these tours - one was to create a critical public awareness and the other was to set right the organizational infrastructure. It was a strenuous undertaking, often involving starvation! In the North, he had to face sometimes demonstrations with black flags rigged up by Indira Congress supporters. Even the intelligence personnel followed him, and kept watch over his goings and doings. Thus, Indira Gandhi was kept in constant touch with what he was doing. But, of course, they fed her with the information she would

be happy to hear. Convinced that the Organization Congress or Congress (O) was a main threat to her political dominance, she exercised all her governmental powers and used liberally money in her campaign to destroy the Old Congress. Every trick in the trade was freely employed to decimate the only organization which could really challenge her. She engineered defections through bribery, and even did not hesitate to use violence in order to accomplish her ends. She organised a systematic scheme to attract members of Congress (O) to her side. In fact, she let loose a virtual reign of terror against the supporters of the rival Congress. Apart from such negative operations, she also employed a strategy of wooing people through demagogic acts and deceptive rhetoric. Not only did she use her womanly charm to attract people to her side, but she indulged in what may be called symbolic politics by making appealing gestures. She would visit the colony of SCs and promise them the heaven. Or she would proclaim that she would give her life to promote the interest of the backward classes. Of course, her key slogan was removal of poverty, the great Garibi hatao ! She would don the garb of tribals and pretend to be one of them by mixing with them. Another important target group for her was the minorities. She went about claiming to be their sole champion. But as anyone with eyes could see, her deeds were the exact opposite of her words. Every promise made to every group remained a promise, never intended to be kept. And, of course, she adopted that supreme strategy of every power-monger in politics - the strategy of divide and rule. She set leader against leader and group against group to keep alive antagonisms so that she could rule the roost. For instance, she adopted a policy of aggravating the border disputes, especially between Maharashtra and Karnataka so that Nijalingappa was forced to face the issue frequently. She knew that it would reduce his political credibility! On 23rd February 1970, Veerendra Patil,

Chief Minister of Mysore, took a delegation of legislators to meet the PM and convey to her their dissatisfaction with her policy on the border issue. She also adopted the policy of systematically dismantling the State governments ruled by the Congress (O). She made good use of unscrupulous Governors to get unfavourable reports so that, on that basis, she could have the governments dismissed. She tried to set her supporters in the State to create situations in which law and order got disrupted. She tried to control State Governments run by other parties by withholding Central assistance, which was their due. Thus she managed to plunge them into economic crisis. In March 1970, Kamaraj met D.P. Mishra, reputed to be the PM's conscience-keeper, at a common friend's house, but Kamaraj later reported that nothing came out as the meeting was meant more to create confusion than to resolve the crisis.

The biggest problem then facing Nijalingappa as the President of Congress (O) was money. In fact, the party was so impoverished that it did not have the money even to run the party office from day to day. While the income was becoming reduced day by day, the expenses mounted. The main source for party funds, the industrialists and the rich, were interested in supporting only the party in power, and now Nijalingappa's Congress was no longer in power, which meant no financial help would come from these sources. When Nijalingappa phoned them for help, they adopted invariably evasive tactics. Moreover, he received very little support from colleagues, with the exception of S.K.Patil. Morarji gave no support of any kind. Then there was the very ticklish question of setting up proper PCCs of the party. Once again, the fact that his was not the ruling party in the states made this an impossible task. The only state and the only Chief Minister on whom he could rely cent percent were Mysore and Veerendra

Patil. But even here Nijalingappa entertained the suspicion that the PM would intervene to create trouble. He was aware that she was, in fact, already moving in that direction. On 28th March 1970, the Congress (O) in Mysore put up four candidates for the elections to Rajya Sabha, but only three got elected. Nijalingappa surmised that this was due to the fact that she bought the votes of some Vokkaliga and Harijan members. Amidst all this political trouble, Nijalingappa managed to get his youngest daughter married off without hitch on 1st May 1970. And this was due to the help extended by friends and close relatives, as he was himself too preoccupied with political problems to pay any attention to such personal issues ! In fact, he attended the wedding of his daughter Poornima and her groom Mrithyunjaya, like any other guest and took off the next day on his political work ! When the marriage expenses exceeded ten thousand rupees, he felt unhappy but accepted the situation as unavoidable ! The Congress (O) which was supposed to be secure in Mysore State, could no longer afford to be complacent. In the by-elections to the three Assembly seats it suffered a defeat, though it won all the four seats to the Council from the local government constituencies. The defeat was naturally seen by Congress (O) men all over the country as a foretaste of what was to come. Nijalingappa, balanced in his views as always, interpreted this set-back as not merely the result of Indira Gandhi's money power but also a consequence of the smugness and indifference of his own party workers. He told the press at this time that the party could be re-built and revived only if the older people gave way to the youth and entrusted them with responsibility. But his colleague Morarji did not agree with this position, and he even warned Nijalingappa against making such statements in public. Nijalingappa's response was always his usual smile but, inwardly, he would say to himself. "Morarji has still not lost the desire to become a PM !"

Morarji urged him to forge alliances with other parties which accepted democratic principles, but Nijalingappa replied to Morarji that he was also eager to bring down Indira's rule but he did not like Morarji making too obvious in public his eagerness to become a PM. Nijalingappa's assumption was that if the leaders did not commit themselves to the goal of power-acquisition, the party's moral strength and stature would automatically enhance. He told Morarji that leaders who were directly associated with Gandhiji should never stoop to that level. But unfortunately for Nijalingappa and his party, leaders who had enjoyed power and authority after 1947 were reluctant to give up their greed for power. One of the general secretaries of the party, Venkatasubbaiah, unable to suffer this moral collapse, begged Nijalingappa to relieve him from office. But the president advised him not to desert the party when it was in difficulty. But Venkatasubbaiah was not satisfied with this advice. Nijalingappa himself knew well that those who had once tasted power as ministers would be totally helpless and disoriented after the loss of power and that was precisely the plight of the senior leaders who, more or less, constituted the Congress (O). The Central Government attempted to harass Nijalingappa and the party over filing the income-tax accounts. Fearing that the person who was funding the expenses of the party office would be victimised by Indira Gandhi if his identity was known, the party did not reveal his name. Nijalingappa made a statement to this effect to the press, and this was enough for the Government to give trouble to the party. Indira Gandhi did not relax her witch-hunting of Congress (O) and its President. She went round propagating that Nijalingappa and his party were making alliance with communal parties whereas, in fact, it was she who was entering into an alliance with the Muslim League in Kerala. But, it was also true that Morarji did try to persuade Nijalingappa to enter into such alliances,

and, to his credit, Nijalingappa did not yield. Morarji went so far as to suggest that they should oppose the legislation to take away the privy purses of the princes and bank nationalization. Unfortunately for Nijalingappa, barring himself and certainly Kamaraj, the overwhelming membership of Congress (O) deserved Indira Gandhi's accusation that the party was reactionary.

The mid-term elections in Kerala in September 1970 provided an opportunity for testing the strength of Congress (O). Nijalingappa undertook a vigorous election campaign for his party. In Kerala, as the elections approached, the Muslim League and Marxist parties indulged in mutual violence. Indira Gandhi twisted the facts to hurl accusation against the Congress (O) that it and the Marxists were responsible for all the violence. As the results of the Kerala elections began to pour on 18 September 1970, the leaders of Congress (O) grew despondent. The party did not win even a single seat. It was an open secret that money power had played a decisive role in the victory of Congress (I). Nijalingappa openly admitted that his party's total failure was due to want of both money power and organisational efficiency. Even as he faced the darkest days for his party, he was characteristically optimistic, and set about to do his best, to strengthen the organization which he headed. As already indicated, Indira Gandhi was waiting for a chance to destabilise the Congress (O) Government in Mysore where the party appeared to be most secure under Veerendra Patil's Chief-Ministership. The opportunity arrived in the form of the Expo in Japan. This was an international show which was celebrated for the display of most advanced technology. Patil thought that it would be a good idea to send a delegation of youths to the exhibition at the expense of the Government. It was planned to send one hundred students. The idea in itself was laudable but the hitch was how to select the one hundred. The

Government decided to send from each University in the State a select group of academically excellent students, that is, those with first rank, and students with outstanding achievements in sports and games. Whatever the criteria, there were bound to be a vast number of students and their parents who would be disgruntled of the selections. It would be literally like opening of the Pandora's Box! The opposition parties found a readymade chance to create trouble for the Government by organising the disgruntled elements. It was believed that a Congress (I) leader, currently out of office, was the inspiration behind the anti-government agitation. The agitation took a violent form, involving incidents of arson. The idea was to create a law and order situation in the State so that the Centre could have an excuse to remove the State Government. The Congress (O) in general was reduced to a mere resolution making body with no prospect of implementing them. Its President, as optimistic as ever, undertook a hurricane tour of the country to promote the interest of the party. Addressing the AICC ( Organisation) meeting in June 1970 in Bombay, Nijalingappa presented a whole list of evils perpetrated by the ruling Congress (I). He referred in particular to the erosion of democratic values and institutions, the loss of freedom for the people, the break-down of national discipline and the distortions in popular political consciousness. He said that his party had not yet adequately responded to the challenge of the situation, as was made clear in its electoral defeats. He now conceded that it was a mistake on his part not to have taken disciplinary action against the PM and her friends quickly enough and thus passed on the initiative into their hands. But, he ended with the optimistic note that it was not too late to recover and revive the party. He exhorted the meeting of PCC and DCC Presidents in the same month to get ready for the forthcoming elections. Later in December, 1970, addressing the AICC meeting in Lucknow, he

told them that the General Elections might be held in February 1971 and that they should be ready for it. He pointed out to them the dangers of running a minority government. He emphasised the need to forge proper and principled electoral alliances with other parties. He also praised Kamaraj for carrying to the villages the slogan, Save India, Save democracy!

As the year 1971 opened, the leaders of every party was caught up in election fever. As for Nijalingappa, he took the coming elections as the last political battle of his life, and prepared for it, fighting in the name of Truth and Dharma and staking all his moral strength and the reputation of a life-time. He threw everything into the electoral struggle of the Congress party which he led, as if it were a matter of life and death. He tried to forge electoral alliances with like-minded parties on the basis of minimally acceptable programmes. At a mammoth rally organised in Bombay by S.K.Patil, Nijalingappa and Morarji explained to their audience on 6 January 1971 the objectives and programmes of their party. The Congress (O) leaders felt elated by the hugeness of the crowd attending their rally. Indira Gandhi, in the meanwhile postponed the elections whether out of political expediency or at the behest of her astrologers. This created some confusion among the leaders of the rival Congress. Perhaps that was the PM's intention in postponing the elections. Nijalingappa did not relax his grip on the electoral preparations which included selection of candidates, propaganda, working out electoral strategy and tactics, and fund raising. He drew a blank from the industrialists when he went round asking for funds. They were, after all, severely practical men, oriented towards profit, and they knew who was going to be the winning horse and they backed her. Her Bank Nationalisation policy, intended to help the poor at the cost of the rich, should have induced the rich not to support her, but

the truth was that they knew as well as Indira Gandhi, that the whole radical facade was meant to bamboozle the people. Therefore, they did not hesitate to contribute generously to the funds of her party. Nijalingappa recorded in his diary entry for 8 March 1971 that the rich were cowards and that they backed only those in power and office. On the morning of 9 March 1971, the counting of votes started and the early results created gloom in the Congress (O) camp. Nijalingappa knew that Indira Gandhi would do better, what with the crores of rupees spent by her party, the thousands of jeeps deployed by her party, the glossy and classy advertisements issued on behalf of her party, the ceaseless propaganda in her party's favour dinned out by the government-controlled AIR and the pictures of her smiling face pasted against every wall in every town, but yet he also believed that the alliances he had forged should win for his party at least two hundred seats. He even thought and hoped that his party would get a majority in Madras and form the government ! But when the total and final results were announced by the evening of 10 March 1971, not only the Congress (O) but the entire opposition was completely routed. In the entry in his diary for that day, Nijalingappa admitted that all parties barring Indira Congress or Congress (I) had been reduced to shambles and that her influence was spreading like a forest fire. He thought it was amazing but true that stalwarts like S.K. Patil, Ashok Mehta, Sanjeeva Reddy, Tarakeshwari Sinha and Ram Subhag Singh, suffered defeat. He wondered about the possible cause for this remarkable phenomenon. He asked himself whether this incredible victory was due to money, skilful campaign, effective propaganda or sheer luck ! Unable to decide, he concluded that it must have been a combination of all these factors ! Indira Gandhi obtained a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha. Her populistic slogans, especially the slogan about removal of poverty, as well as

Muslim and Harijan votes, must have been behind this phenomenal success. With such a massive mandate, she could now do virtually whatever she willed. The Congress (O) leaders were trying to discover the causes of their failure. Kamaraj was even more frustrated than others because, in his own State, the DMK had registered a victory. The Congress (O) working Committee which met on 13 and 14 March 1971 to conduct a post-mortem, felt that the elections must have been won with fraud. But the party itself was reduced to total collapse, and most of its members were scared of Indira Gandhi and were ready to desert the party in a cowardly and selfish manner. Therefore, the Committee's decision not to merge with other parties but try to strengthen the party was of little practical relevance. In Mysore itself, Veerendra Patil's position began to become precarious. Everywhere party structures began to crack and party indiscipline was on the rampage. The PM did her best to encourage these developments. On 18 March 1971, Patil tendered the resignation of his Ministry to the Governor. The reign of defections to Congress (I) started soon after all over the country. It became clear that Congress (O) had no future as a national party, and Mysore leaders, Patil and Rajasekhara Murthy, began to think in terms of starting a regional party. But Nijalingappa was steadfast in his commitment to the party, and he pledged all his resources in the interest of the party. But he also felt frustrated that even those Mysore leaders whom he had first brought into politics and groomed appeared likely to desert his party. But there were also staunch loyalists like Ramakrishna Hegde and Gurupada Swamy, who told him that they should not lose hope but strengthen the party. Nijalingappa chose to make Hegde the President of the PCC but Hegde could not take up the offer as he had health problems. Eventually, Patil took it up.

Nijalingappa, with his extraordinary capacity for subordinating the self to a larger cause, began to think in terms of handing over the presidentship of Congress (O) to a younger person who could infuse the dynamism and energy of youth into the party, than undergoing decline. On 11 April, 1971 he met Kamaraj and broached the subject. Kamaraj agreed but felt that none would come forward to shoulder the responsibility given the financial situation in which the party was placed. But if the seniors took up the responsibility for fund-raising a replacement for Nijalingappa would be easier to find. Their greatest problem was the growing passivity of their senior colleagues like Atulya Ghosh and Sanjeeva Reddy, who had been disoriented by the electoral debacle. The AICC session held in mid-May in Bombay, turned out to be Nijalingappa's last official event as the President of the Congress (O). The Working Committee resolved unanimously that Nijalingappa should name his successor. Such is the human hankering for position and office that even the Presidentship of a party in disarray became an object of active competition ! Hectic attempts were made by S.K.Patil, C.B.Gupta, Morarji and even Kamaraj to canvass their proteges ! There was a bitter rivalry between Kamaraj and Morarji to establish supremacy in the party. Kamaraj supported Ram Subhag Singh's candidature, which Morarji strongly opposed. But Nijalingappa was not involved in these squabbles. After assessing the consensus, he found that Singh was not acceptable to the majority and then he suggested the name of Sadiq Ali. But Ali was adamantly against the idea in the beginning. He was brought round by S.K.Patil and Nijalingappa assured him unanimous support. He was elected as the President, thus relieving Nijalingappa of formal responsibility of the office. The members showered praise on the new President and showered equal praise on the outgoing one. Patil in particular hailed Nijalingappa as the party's

saviour during its darkest days. Sadiq Ali praised Nijalingappa's commitment to the principles of truth and fairness. Soon after giving up the presidential office, Nijalingappa came down to Dharwad to take rest for a while in the salubrious atmosphere of Karnatak University campus where his son Umakant taught Physics. He enjoyed the peaceful life there for the first time in his life ! He tried to confine himself to his family - wife, children and grand children - for a change. But he could not do so because he felt it his duty to raise funds for the party to clear the debts incurred during the elections. He thought of visiting Calcutta, Lucknow and Bombay in this connection. In the meanwhile, he heard the news over the radio that Sanjeeva Reedy had resigned from the Working Committee. It pained him to hear this news. In a sense, he also felt relieved because Reddy was not a compatible colleague. Reddy explained his resignation as due to his inclination towards socialism. This prompted Nijalingappa to recall bitterly how he had antagonised Indira Gandhi to make Reddy the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. This occurred in 1967 when Indira Gandhi had dropped Reddy from her Ministry as an unwanted person. It was Nijalingappa who persuaded her to offer Reddy the Speakership. But as usual, she said one thing and did the opposite of it. While Reddy had filed the nomination for Speakership, Indira Gandhi encouraged secretly another colleague of hers to file the nomination papers. Thus election became inevitable. Fortunately for Nijalingappa, Reddy won the contest with a big majority. A further involvement in party work became unavoidable for Nijalingappa when Sadiq Ali suggested that he should be the party's treasurer. Veerendra Patil and other younger leaders called on Nijalingappa and suggested that seniors should withdraw from the centre-stage of the party in order to give the party a chance to revive. Nijalingappa guessed shrewdly that the younger members in the party regarded the seniors as an obstacle to their progress.

Many former friends told him of their desire to defect to Indira camp. In short, Nijalingappa was totally disillusioned by the members of his party, and he thought they were ready to abandon truth, justice and honesty in pursuit of office, power and money. He was disappointed even by Veerendra Patil when a press correspondent told him that Patil was keen on leadership and office, and was not interested in reviving the party. In fact, Patil and Nijalingappa's elder son-in-law, Mahalinga Shetty, met the old man and pleaded with him that they should launch a new party to fight the coming assembly elections because people had lost faith in Congress (O). Their words made the old man furious, and he made clear to them his mind.

The relinquishing of presidentship of the party did not mean rest from political life for Nijalingappa. He was determined to re-vitalise the party and employ it as an instrument to fight Indira Gandhi's immoral and unscrupulous politics. In this cause, he toured different parts of the State to educate people about the harm done by Indira Gandhi's unprincipled politics. But worse for him were the shocks administered by his own erstwhile colleagues. Especially galling was Ram Subhag Singh's betrayal, because he had been earlier regarding Nijalingappa as his "Gurudev". Singh issued press statements against his former Congress (O) colleagues. He was supported by another erstwhile Congress (O) colleague, Tarakeshwari Sinha, who issued press statements abusing the Old Congress. Nijalingappa realised that their volte-face was due to the fact that Singh failed to get the Presidentship and Tarakeshwari could not become a General Secretary. He did not rule out the possibility that they were trying to attract PM's attention. Nijalingappa had his own secret source of information from which he learnt that secret emissaries were sent by Indira Gandhi to woo Kamaraj and Singh. In spite of his close association

with Kamaraj, Nijalingappa was never sure of his position since he never indicated what was in his mind. All this seamy side of public and political life prompted him to ask in his diary why he should not give up political life and just live like a private person in peace ! Yet, he immediately saw that it would amount to escapism and dereliction of duty if he now deserted the organization. Whatever the future, he knew what was his duty in the present and was prepared to follow it. In the true spirit of a Lingayat, he committed himself to the ideal of Kayaka or work as a moral duty. At the Bangalore district political conference, held on 12th September 1971 in Bangalore, Veerendra Patil and Kamaraj hinted that Indira Gandhi had changed radically! But Nijalingappa, as steadfast in his commitment as ever, told them that he was not persuaded. They even urged him to work again for Congress unity, disregarding the election defeat. In his diary, Nijalingappa noted that these two had lost their equanimity after loss of power, and speculated whether this was reflected in their speeches. He found their attitude very distasteful because it was oriented towards acquisition of power through elections without any regard for moral considerations. In fact, he wrote a letter to Kamaraj, expressing his genuine feelings about their stand. The only fully dependable friend seemed to him to be S.K.Patil. Whenever Nijalingappa made a trip to Delhi, he would invariably do so via Bombay. There he and Patil would re-affirm their determination to extend every support to Congress (O) President Sadiq Ali, and they never went to Delhi without carrying some funds for the party which was perpetually on the verge of closing its office for want of financial support. But they found it very hard to find businessmen who were prepared to offer them funds. These were the very same persons who rushed to pour funds into the party's coffers when it was in office ! An ardent reader of English poetry he was proposed by the situation to recall

Tennysons's lines on the plight of a king who was on the point of dying. But he wrote optimistically in his diary that bad days would be followed by better days, if one continued to be steadfast. In the meanwhile, poor Sadiq Ali found the going hard because the party's leaders were indecisive and some of them like Singh and Tarakeshwari had issued anti-party statements to the press. There was little doubt that the party structures were functioning badly. Singh, for example, did not hesitate to attack bitterly nominations made by Sadiq Ali as presidents to various committees. When some members criticised him without explicitly naming him, Singh left the meeting with a huff. Ali was so fed up with the way things were going that he tendered his resignation. Later he was persuaded to withdraw it. When he approached his mentor Nijalingappa for advice, he was advised to be firm and take firmly whatever action was necessary, because laxness in decision-making would demoralise the workers. After attending the Working Committee, when he returned to Bangalore, the first thing he heard was the rumour that some Mysore Congressmen were planning to float a new party. Nijalingappa noted in his diary his anguish at this display of unprincipled and opportunistic politics by his party colleagues but this only strengthened his determination to stick with the party all the more. He was convinced that such persons were unfit to be leaders of the people. In the PCC Executive meeting on the next day, some members voiced the same view. Their main worry was that their political influence was getting eclipsed. When the party lost the legal battle over the party symbol, they repeated similar arguments against continuing the Old Congress Party. Some of them like Veerendra Patil were in real dilemma - they had lost faith in Congress (O) but they were reluctant to go elsewhere. Nijalingappa took him to task for such political wavering and he continued to harbour doubts about Patil's loyalty to the party. Against every odd and

adversity, Nijalingappa refused to change his position and his commitment to the Old Congress party, and even tried to support the party office in Delhi by sending personal money to President Sadiq Ali ! In the meanwhile the Congress (I) workers over-enthusiastic after their victory over the symbol fight, ransacked the party office on Jantarmantar Road on 12 November, 1971, physically assaulted Sadiq Ali, pushed him out, threatened the staff and made off with official papers! The police did not arrive in time to help the victims and it was quite likely that this was a deliberate act on the part of the police. When the matter was raised in the Parliament by Morarji, the PM was all innocence. Even the AIR did not mention this incident apparently under pressure from above. In protest Sadiq Ali undertook a fast. The party's Working Committee met to condemn the political hooliganism in the country and urged the President to give up his fast. The Jantarmantar incident was merely a prelude to what was to follow on a national scale. Similar violent assaults by the workers of the Congress (I) took place in Bangalore on the office of the PCC (O). Nijalingappa's portrait was torn to pieces, and the furniture was smashed. Nijalingappa who always called a spade a spade saw these as acts of pure fascism. He expressed this view to the press in Dharwad.

When the war with Pakistan started from 4th December 1971, the Government proclaimed an external emergency. The PM visited several countries to canvass support for India on the East Bengal issue. Her policy of antagonising the Western powers, worked against India in the UN. Nijalingappa noted in his diary that this was a wrong foreign policy. Moreover he was also critical of the working of Indian embassies abroad. They had failed to do their job, which was to explain to the foreign countries clearly and coherently India's policy. This was all the more regrettable because India had a strong case. He

was also critical of Government's delay in recognising Bangladesh. While the Government had done so on 6th December 1971, Nijalingappa thought it would have been wiser to have done so at least eight months earlier. This would have been prevented the Indo-Pak war. Throughout the war, he was full of anxiety and tension but when Bangladesh became victorious on 16th December 1971, none was happier than Nijalingappa. In his diary, he did not hesitate to give Indira Gandhi fulsome praise for her courage and skill. Yet he also was sure that the lady would use this achievement to promote her personal and party interest ! Indira's public image was at its best at this time, and if she ordered then an election, she would win with an overwhelming majority. Nijalingappa realised that she had attained the status of a Goddess in the eyes of the common man. He and S.K.Patil had to face the bitter truth that any electoral contest with her at this time would spell disaster for all her opponents. Nijalingappa noted in his diary that a great deal of confusion was being created in the minds of the people by the fact that his own Congress (O) was supporting Congress (I) in the momentous constitutional changes it was making, and thus appearing indistinguishable from the other Congress ! S.K.Patil persisted in the hope that an effective rival party could be created against Indira based on foreign policy of friendship with all nations, respect for all religions and a productivist ideology by the younger generation if only the elders supported it. Thus the demand for a new and separate party was growing day by day. Nijalingappa noted in his diary that on 26th December 1971, Veerendra Patil and Ramakrishna Hegde told him that Morarji, Patil, Gupta and Ghosh were losing their credibility and therefore he should retire from politics. In those darkest days, any encouraging sign was welcome to Congress (O) leaders and Nijalingappa drew solace from the fact that his party was officially given the election symbol of

a woman working at a spinning wheel. But such small triumphs of Congress (O) did not receive much publicity in the official media whereas the most trivial news about Indira and her party were blown out of size. His belief in independent media, free from governmental control, got reinforced by this experience.

The demand for liquidating Congress (O) and starting a new party in its place continued to worry Nijalingappa. He was especially disturbed by the news that Hassan DCC, as reported in the press on 3rd January 1972, had passed the resolution that Nijalingappa and others should resign from the Congress and that Mysore PCC should be re-constituted as a new party. He suspected shrewdly that this so-called new party was meant to merge later into Congress (I). The issue of a new party came up again before the meeting of the Working Committee and the meeting of PCC Presidents on 5th January 1972. It was resolved there to continue the status-quo. This decision did not go well with the leaders from Mysore. Nijalingappa was pained that two leaders who he had spawned politically were behind this dissatisfaction. Out of sheer anguish he asked himself in his diary whether he had made wrong choices or whether something was wrong with himself ! The PCC endorsed the Working Committee stand. But Nijalingappa's son-in-law, Mahalingashetty, brought to his notice the fact that partymen from Tumkur did not approve of his attacking bitterly the PM from time to time because it would only result in their losing public sympathy. Perhaps they were right and Nijalingappa was over-reacting. Yet given the trajectory of his experience with her, one might on his part hurl at the PM such a direct challenge when she had all the resources under her control. But he was too outspoken a person by nature to display diplomatic niceties ! Perhaps more to the point, his critique should have attacked more her policies than her person. Most of his old friends were

virtually deserting him and he was getting tragically isolated. He was too morally oriented and committed to tolerate lapses from right conduct on the part of others. Even today, his bitterness against her is as alive as ever, but he is always fair-minded enough to recognise her abilities. Yet another criticism he had against Congress (I) was that it did not give tickets to good persons in the elections. But then his bitterness against Indira was so deep that he was not prepared to see that every party was guilty of choosing questionable candidates, though to different extent. The preparations for elections began from mid-1972. The Congress (O) faced a financial crisis as it found it hard to raise funds for the elections. The industrialists did not help it fearing Indira Gandhi's wrath. The only silver lining that Nijalingappa could see was that legally the Jantarmantar office was handed over to Congress (O). But this was really no comfort. He hopped from city to city to collect funds but without any result. He toured Karnataka on a whirlwind campaign. After the elections, he returned to his son's residence in Dharwad, awaiting the election results. Exceeding all expectations, perhaps even of the party itself, Congress (I) won a landslide victory. Unable to stomach such a devastating defeat, some party men suggested to Nijalingappa that the elections were rigged and corrupt practices were indulged in such as cheating in vote-counting and use of chemicals on ballot papers. Nijalingappa believed them and issued press statements alleging these malpractices by Congress (I). At the same time, he advised his followers not to be put off by the defeat and strengthen the party with renewed faith and commitment. In the post-election arrangements, many states found it difficult to arrive at a consensus on leadership and left the decision to Indira Gandhi. This prompted Nijalingappa to wonder whether this was not a travesty of democracy. In Mysore, he predicted that Indira Gandhi did not like Lingayats and Vokkaligas, and Devaraj Urs

who had the support of majority of legislators, would be the Chief Minister. In Nijalingappa's own private estimate, Urs was better than Siddaveerappa, but Badarinarayan was better than Urs. He knew that the former had no chance because he happened to be a Brahmin. !

The Congress (O) Working Committee held a post-mortem session on elections on 22 March 1972. During the long discussion, there was unanimity that Congress (O) workers were demoralised. Kamaraj told the meeting that there was a strong feeling in his party that Congress (O) and Congress (I) should re-unite against the DMK, but he was personally opposed to the idea. In general, PCC Presidents agreed that they should strengthen the party to function as an effective opposition. Nijalingappa suggested a massive programme for revitalising the party. This included the organisation of training camps for cadres in every district in which as many as a thousand would be trained. Later these trained cadres should tour villages and educate the people about the wrong policies of the Government. When the elections to the Rajya Sabha from the State legislators' constituency were announced, two persons advanced rival claims - Gurupadaswamy and Veerendra Patil. Nijalingappa preferred the former because he had already been earlier a successful member of the Rajya Sabha. But others supported Patil on the ground that he had a better chance of winning. Nijalingappa agreed. Patil did win the election on the basis of cross-voting! The combined effect of Bangla victory and electoral victory was to make Indira Gandhi a national leader without a rival, raising her to the zenith of power and glory ! Every other leader was dwarfed by her supremacy. Every state leader was ready to follow her like Mary's Little Lamb ! She became an absolute ruler whose every word had the force of law. Anyone daring to oppose her was doomed to bite the dust. Riding on a massive

popular mandate, she did not hesitate to exercise dictatorial power. All this did not seem to ruffle Nijalingappa's essential optimism and equanimity. He went about attacking the PM without fear or restraint, confident that she would sooner or later suffer a downfall ! But he realised that mere abuse was futile and that the only answer to her regime of unprincipled and unscrupulous politics which she claimed to be Gandhian, was to strengthen his party.

Towards the end of October 1972, the AICC (O) met in Pune. It turned out to be more spectacular than what the leaders had hoped for. Nijalingappa was accommodated in the house of Kothari, a leading Industrialist of the city. Kothari family extended to him a warm and affectionate hospitality. In his speech, Nijalingappa touched on a range and variety of themes. He argued that the ruling group was more keen on developing political power than on generating economic strength. He argued that this policy led to economic backwardness, socialism, social justice and removal of poverty were all grand slogans but they were mere words without substance. What was important was to define them in specific terms so that they could be implemented. Nijalingappa said that he asked Kamaraj to explain the exact import of secularism. Kamaraj's reply was another question, asking Nijalingappa whether he could explain Hinduism precisely ! The point made by Nijalingappa was that every person had his own definition of these terms. But the definition of socialism most relevant to India was the one given by the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. The essence of this definition was that money should not be concentrated in one place. Power and authority also should not be centralised. The ordinary men should be given full opportunity to achieve all-round development. Nijalingappa asked whether the ruling party was really implementing its much-publicised Ten-point

Programme. For instance, he asked why they had not implemented the scheme for insuring the rural live-stock. He asked whether Bank Nationalisation really helped in the removal of poverty. Indira Gandhi was using the AIR as a medium for her personal publicity. He asked whether the withdrawal of privy purses of the Princes contributed to the development of socialism. The control of drugs had resulted in prohibitive prices beyond the reach of ordinary people. The higher judiciary had become the tool of the rich. The poor were unable even to go upto the district courts. Hence, he questioned whether land reforms have really been successful. The land-lords had forestalled the law and distributed their land among their relatives. He referred to the reports that the attempts to retain right over land had resulted in divorces on a large scale in Andhra and Punjab! Inadequate production had resulted in inflation. The cultivable land was not a resource that could grow. It remained, on the other hand, shrunk because of the new roads laid, schools and houses built and factories set up. Thus, there was an overriding need to increase production. Agriculture needed greater attention, and irrigation facilities would reduce unemployment. He told his audience that it was the foremost task of the party workers to go to the people and explain to them all these issues. Looking back, one could question the wisdom of criticising Bank Nationalisation and the cancellation of privy purses. He could have made his other important points without making this counter-productive attack on popular policies. In the elections to the Working Committee, Nijalingappa was inclined to support Gurupadaswamy. But owing to the mediation of Nagappa Alva, he was persuaded to remain neutral, and thus enable Veerendra Patil to win.

Come December, all over Karnataka people were ready to celebrate Nijalingappa's birth-day. His admirers always made

it a proud affair. In Chitradurga, his followers and the citizenry in general observed his seventyfirst birth-day on a spectacular scale. It fell on 10 December 1972. There was a grand procession organised in which notable participants included H.D.Deve Gowda, Veerendra Patil and others. Deve Gowda presided over the felicitation meeting. Nijalingappa was buried in garlands, and he was offered a gift in the form of a large sum by his admirers. This amount he handed over to the PCC office. It was an event that clearly showed that a good man could be honoured even when he was out of power. However, Nijalingappa was not popular with a group of Lingayats and their religious heads. Nijalingappa did not approve of mixing up religion and politics and he was especially opposed to the Swamijis currying the favour of politicians in power. He had no sympathy for such politicised religious heads. Fortunately, there were many Swamijis who kept aloof from politics. Nijalingappa was an admirer of one such Swamiji, Raghavendra Swamiji of Malladihalli. In fact, he had extended help to the Ashrama of this Swamiji who was doing great public service. The new State Government refused to help the Ashrama because they identified him as a Nijalingappa supporter! There were even attempts to murder this good Swamiji. The political situation in Karnataka was growing increasingly hostile to Nijalingappa's party. Devaraj Urs, the new CM, even accused the previous Congress regime for the famine conditions that had arisen in Bijapur in 1973. By implication, this was also a criticism against Nijalingappa. Nijalingappa reacted sharply to this at a press conference and declared that when Urs was in his Ministry he had done nothing. Urs was too shrewd a politician not to involve in any further controversy with Nijalingappa. Nijalingappa was convinced that the famine could have been prevented if only the irrigation projects he had initiated had been completed. The people of Bijapur decided to offer Satyagraha against the

Government to protest against its indifference to the plight of the victims of the famine situation. They requested Nijalingappa to inaugurate the Satyagraha in Bijapur on 5 March 1973. In fact, he offered himself as one of the first 25 Satyagrahis. The town observed a total hartal, and no shop was open on that day. The Satyagrahis were formally arrested, given food, and then let off! The next day, Nijalingappa met the district head and advised him on the relief measures to be taken. On 6 March 1973, he undertook an extensive tour of famine-stricken Indi taluka, and was full of anguish at the heart-rending spectacle. All fields were dried up, and trees had withered. People had no water to drink and no food to eat. The live-stock was in bad shape. The Centre did not give Karnataka as much help as it did to Maharashtra. At this time, the PM also visited Karnataka. While Nijalingappa did not care to call on her, Veerendra Patil met her. Nijalingappa was quite disturbed by the report of this meeting.

At this time, the Supreme Court was hearing arguments about Fundamental Rights. The Court decided the case in favour of the Parliament by stating that it had the right to amend the Constitution to reduce or take away these basic rights. Indira Gandhi and her followers hailed this judgement as a victory for their side. Indira's Government tried to control the Judiciary, by elevating to the position of Chief Justice of Supreme Court a person amenable to their wishes, Justice Ray, over his three seniors including Justice Hegde from Karnataka. The bypassed judges resigned out of self-respect. These developments s̄addened Nijalingappa. He had to watch the gradual erosiōn of the morale of the leaders of Congress (O) which was sinking day by day. But Nijalingappa himself did not waver in his commitment to the security and welfare of the nation. In the meanwhile, Ashok Mehta, whom Nijalingappa did not fully

approve of, replaced Sadiq Ali as the President of Congress (O). Whenever they could get a chance, Veerendra Patil, Ramakrishna Hegde and Deve Gowda counselled Mehta that Nijalingappa's time was over and that if they followed him their future would be bleak! Undeterred by such adverse conditions, Nijalingappa continued to go round to meet the people, discuss with them their problems and enlightened them. It was a remarkable spectacle and one that demonstrated the strength of sheer moral power. People called on Nijalingappa who now had neither power nor office to seek his advice and blessings. The common people thus looked upon Nijalingappa as a source of hope. But the party itself was deteriorating fast as leader after leader tried to desert it. He could see that moves were being made constantly to merge the two Congresses under Indira Gandhi's control. This was how he read the publicised meeting between Kamaraj and Indira Gandhi, and the frequent meetings between Veerendra Patil and Kamaraj and Krishnamachari. Nijalingappa's meeting with Kamaraj strengthened his suspicion that they were all planning to liquidate Congress (O). In Delhi he was warned by Kriplani and his wife against merging with Congress (I). In the meeting of Congress (O) Working Committee in Bangalore, Kamaraj argued that it was necessary to forge an alliance with Congress (I) in Tamil Nadu in order to defeat the DMK and AIDMK parties. But it was clear that Kamaraj seldom thought about any problem beyond Tamil Nadu and he lacked a national perspective. Kamaraj even threatened to leave the party if his suggestion was not accepted. While he fulminated against the corruption in the regional parties such as DMK and AIDMK, Kamaraj, in Nijalingappa's eyes, failed to see that corruption was a national issue. Owing to illness, Nijalingappa did not attend the Working Committee held in Delhi on 11th November, 1973. As a member of the Congress Working Committee continuously from 1948 excepting for two years

during Nehru's presidentship after Tandon's resignation, he had been attending its meetings with religious regularity. During those two years he was kept out of the Working Committee because some Brahmin leaders from North Karnataka poisoned Nehru's mind against Nijalingappa. In the meanwhile Kamaraj met Indira Gandhi for the second time in November 1973 and worked out an electoral alliance in the elections to be held in Pondicherry. In his diary, Nijalingappa repeated the observation that Kamaraj was regional leader who could never stretch his vision beyond the horizon of Tamil Nadu. He became furious when he read in the papers that Sanjeeva Reddy issued a statement on 19th November 1973 that he would meet Kamaraj to persuade him to strengthen Indira Gandhi's leadership. This news went against Nijalingappa's normal perception of Reddy and his politics. In short, every day Nijalingappa had to face reports about the rapid crumbling of Congress (O) leadership. Many party men condemned Kamaraj's agreement with Indira Gandhi made behind the back of the Working Committee. Nijalingappa felt that they had spoiled Kamaraj by praising him to the skies and this had gone to his head and destroyed his sense of judgement ! He was literally disgusted by the statement of his own protege, Veerendra Patil, to the effect that he was not an enemy of Indira Gandhi, though he was not interested in uniting the two Congresses, and that he did not condemn her administration but he condemned only the state government of Karnataka for taking wrong policy decisions. Such shocks became common to Nijalingappa during this time. Perhaps the worst shock was the letter from Ashok Mehta, Congress (O) president to him, dated 21st November 1973. In that letter, Mehta justified the agreement with Congress (I) made by Kamaraj to fight the elections in Pondicherry and Coimbatore on the ground that Indira Gandhi's Congress was a secular and democratic party! Such moves, statements and acts on the part

of his party colleagues were totally contrary to Nijalingappa's firm conviction that, instead of caving in, the party should expose the corruption and immorality of Congress (I) and thus increase its own credibility. In his diary, he noted that the most painful moment had come for him when he might have to express his views in the coming meeting of the Working Committee and then bid farewell to the Organization which had been his very life. His cup of misery became full when he learnt that even C.B.Gupta and S.K. Patil were ready to jump on the Kamaraj bandwagon. There were even strong rumours circulating in Congress (O) circles that Kamaraj had struck a secret bargain with Indira Gandhi. However, the Congress (O) Working Committee resolved in its meeting of 6th April 1974 that the party should not merge with Indira Congress and should not extend it any co-operation. Nijalingappa noted in his diary that this resolution might drive Kamaraj out of the party, which would be a loss, but it was, on the whole, better that such persons left the party. In the meanwhile, to his regret, Indira Gandhi's Congress was gaining strength through defections, which are now a structural part of the new post-Independence political culture in the country. At a time when the party was in a confused and directionless state, Nijalingappa received yet another shock when he got hold of a confidential letter of resignation from presidentship of the party written by Ashok Mehta, on 11th May 1974. The reason offered for the resignation was his inability to function effectively. Nijalingappa characterised this as an act of pure escapism. Not only the party affairs but the developments in the country and the problems they raised were so intractable that Nijalingappa felt frustrated. He thought that Indira Gandhi referred to these problems in the States but she had really no solutions other than slogans to offer. She tried to shift the responsibility to the opposition parties for their negative approach. Nijalingappa took every

opportunity to condemn Indira Gandhi's policies and postures. His friend, J.M. Imam, agreed with him, and he also condemned her policy of politically and opportunistically exploiting the minorities and the SCs. Nijalingappa thought that her idea of making Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed the President was part of this strategy. In his diary, he argued that JP should change his emphasis from removing Indira Gandhi from power to creating a new party capable of challenging her. But he was not hopeful that such a party would emerge.

In 1974, a critical year in the history of Indian Republic, JP as a principled Gandhian leader, resolved to organise a non-violent revolution against Indira Gandhi's corrupt and immoral regime. But the youth movement in Bihar under his auspices turned violent as famine conditions erupted and political corruption reached astronomical proportions. The Chatra Parishat, undeterred by State violence and led by JP's moral leadership, carried out a powerful agitation against Indira Gandhi's rule. The movement demanded the dissolution of the Parliament and other legislatures. But Indira Gandhi's colleagues, Subramaniam, a Minister in her Cabinet, and "Shankar Dayal Sharma, the Congress (I) President, dubbed JP movement as a counter-revolutionary and reactionary development. But the whole country was aflame with anti-government agitation. In Gujarat, the government machinery came to a stand-still. In Chitradurga itself, the Congress (O) youth wing met under Nijalingappa's presidentship on 15th April 1974 to express its solidarity with the JP movement as the only solution for the mounting multiple crises in the country. In sharp contrast his old friend Kamaraj issued a press statement urging the people to unite behind Indira Gandhi as that was the only way to save the country from the grave crisis it was facing. His other friend, S.K. Patil, wrote Nijalingappa a letter, questioning Kamaraj's

integrity. Nijalingappa himself characterised Kamaraj's deeds as an expression of hunger for power and authority. The capital of the country, Delhi, turned into a virtual stage for political chicanery, intrigue, and shadow-play ! During Nijalingappa's visits to the capital, leaders of different parties met him and discussed with him the country's many problems. On 30th September 1974, Raj Narain and Piloo Modi tried to persuade Nijalingappa to join the Bharatiya Loka Dal party. They told him that if he and his colleagues from Karnataka, Veerendra Patil and Hegde, joined their party, it would become rejuvenated. C.B.Gupta also argued with him that Congress (O) should merge with BLD party. All around, the JP movement was spreading like a forest-fire. In Patna and Delhi, the participants in the movement became victims of police atrocities. Even JP himself was beaten by the police. As a result, he suffered serious injuries. But the government-controlled AIR did not mention this in its newscasts. As the negotiations between JP and the PM broke down, the agitation continued in a more aggressive manner. The Government did not hesitate to suppress the movement by a liberal use of the draconic MISA. Under this law, the arrested persons had no right to approach a court of law. Anyone could be taken into custody without assigning reason under this law. But such a policy of suppression served only to intensify the agitation. On 5th March 1975, a Delhi Bandh was organised. Led by JP himself, the agitators staged a non-violent demonstration against the Government. Chavan, Indira Gandhi's close associate, openly condemned the JP movement as the work of political opportunists. The procession and other public displays of protest against the Government were successfully carried out by the agitators on 6th March 1975. JP toured the country to bring about a political awakening of the people, and also to collect funds for the movement. Nijalingappa collected a substantial sum and presented it to JP

during his visit to Davanagere on 5th May 1975. One of the most serious shocks to Indira Gandhi came on 12th June 1975 in the form of a judgement of the Allahabad High Court, which declared her election void. The opposition, led by JP, demanded that, in the light of this judgement, she should resign from her office. But whether stage-managed or genuine, huge crowd of ordinary people such as workers, rikshawallas, small tradesmen and rural folk from neighbouring villages paraded before her residence, shouting slogans in her support. Indira Gandhi asked and obtained a stay order from the Supreme Court. Senior leaders like JP, Morarji and Kriplani, proclaimed that her continuance in office amounted to moral bankruptcy. Nijalingappa also harshly criticised her behaviour as nothing but an expression of greed and hunger for personal power. But Indira Gandhi defeated the judicial decision by passing legislation with her brute majority in the Parliament, favouring her continuance in office. Nijalingappa described this as the worst political sin ever committed in the history of mankind !

After the Allahabad judgement, a powerful caucus around Indira Gandhi emerged, and it consisted of her second son, Sanjaya Gandhi, Siddharthashankar Ray, Bansi Lal, R.K. Dhawan and others. They took charge of Indira Gandhi's politics and administration. Their sole objective seemed to be to promote a powerful personality cult centered on Indira Gandhi. They organised systematically in every town pro-Indira processions and demonstrations. It is now clear that they were also secretly preparing to impose the Emergency on the unwitting nation. Her Young Turk colleagues like Chandrasekhar and Mohan Dharia were also kept in the dark about the Emergency preparations. In the meanwhile, her main political challenger, JP managed to forge an alliance of opposition parties under the name of Lok Sangharsha Samiti. This alliance was organised

specifically to carry on a nation-wide, non-violent agitation from 29th June 1975 against Indira Gandhi's dictatorial regime. They issued an appeal to the people to be ready to go to jail in the cause of restoring moral values, establishment of a genuine people's Government and the realisation of JP's Total Revolution. They asked the police and the army to disobey illegal and unconstitutional orders of the Government. In short, they declared a virtual war on Indira Gandhi's Government but it was presumed to be a non-violent and Gandhian struggle in moral terms. Clearly Indira Gandhi saw that such a massive and popular movement could not be handled by anything less than an Emergency. At 11.45 P.M., on 25th June 1975, perhaps the darkest day in the history of Indian liberal democracy, President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed signed in the presence of Indira Gandhi and Siddhartha Shankar Ray, the Emergency Proclamation. The decision to declare the Emergency had not been mooted in any Cabinet meeting and even the Home Minister was kept in the dark about it. By 6 A.M., the following day, 26th June 1975, opposition leaders like Morarji and others were taken into custody. A series of supportive laws proclaimed in rapid succession transformed at least temporarily the political system into a dictatorship, with all power concentrated in one person, the PM. All democratic institutions and practices - public meetings, hartals, strikes, free press functioning parties, partially free media- vanished overnight. The people were at the mercy of the Government and its bureaucracy. Official corruption and bribery escalated. While power-seeking politicians like Chavan and Jagjivan Ram slavishly toed the Indira line, there were countless ordinary and not so ordinary citizens all over the country, who resisted the autocratic regime went to jail wave after wave. All checks and controls over Ministers and their bureaucratic minions were systematically dismantled and the Indian Constitution was virtually in tatters. Only the

Soviet Union, for obvious political reasons, supported the Emergency, while the Western powers, also for obvious political reasons, condemned the Emergency. In fact, it was the caucus revolving round the mercurial and irresponsible figure of Sanjay Gandhi, that ruled the country with absolute power. A few months prior to the proclamation of Emergency, Nijalingappa had not been keeping good health. He had both eyes operated on, and his body was getting perceptibly weaker. Yet he was preparing for the call to go to jail. He was expecting to be arrested any moment, and his wife, no stranger to her husband's jail-going, told him to go ahead ! The meeting of the Working Committee of Congress(O), scheduled to be held in Madras to discuss the Emergency, actually met in Delhi on 30th August 1975. Everybody was shocked at Kamaraj's absence at the meeting. In the meeting, Nijalingappa urged his colleagues to resist Indira Gandhi's rule, which he characterised as an unholy mixture of communism, communalism, fascism and pseudo-democracy. He asked them to fight it in the name of Gandhiji. However, on the advice of his doctors, Nijalingappa was prevented from taking part directly in the anti-Emergency struggle and he felt very bad about it. In a press statement issued on 17th March 1976, he openly expressed his pro-agriculture commitment. He condemned the system by which the urban products got more price leading to inflation while the agricultural products like grains were under-priced. He suggested support price for grains and strict control over the inflation of industrial products. He argued for restoring a healthy balance between the rural and urban, industrial and agricultural sectors. In spite of his failing health, he continued to take keen interest in the political goings on in the country, and tried to play an indirect role in it. On 13th June 1976, addressing a conference of Congress (O) workers in Cochin, he suggested that they should carry on the struggle against the dictatorial

regime by creating a new party or alternately through an alliance of parties opposed to the regime. He pleaded for a popular movement against the personalised and autocratic rule of Indira Gandhi. In his own State of Karnataka, he found that the PCC (O) president, Veerendra Patil, was doing nothing about the situation. Enraged, he urged Patil to resign from the office. He toured the State in the company of colleagues like Shri Rama Reddy, K.S.Hegde, Gurupadaswamy and LakshmiSagar, to urge the people to fight the Emergency laws. On Gandhi Jayanti day in October 1976, senior leaders like Kriplani visited Rajaghat to pay their homage and proclaimed there that currently the freedom of the people of India was destroyed by the ruling clique in the country. On that day it so happened that Kamaraj passed away. Indira Gandhi who attended the funeral announced that it was Kamaraj's last wish that the two Congresses should unite under her leadership !

Indira Gandhi postponed the elections to the Parliament in order to consolidate her position with the help of her son, Sanjay's unscrupulous politics. In the meanwhile, JP's health deteriorated very fast and it was feared that he was at the door of death. The Government released the ailing Lok Nayak, not out of any concern for his health, but to claim credit for itself as a humanitarian Government. It knew that JP would not last out and that, if he died in jail, it would needlessly put the Government in the dock. So it calculated that the old leader should die outside its jail! When he came out of the prison on 12 November 1976 on a temporary release, JP found fear writ on the faces of the few who had come to welcome him. Two months later, Indira Gandhi released other leaders like Morarji. On 30 October 1976, Law Minister Gokhale announced in the Parliament that the Emergency had been extended by one more year. It was at this critical juncture that Nijalingappa felt

that the time had come for organising an opposition party of all like-minded groups at the national level to challenge Indira Gandhi. He found that his friends in Karnataka like Thimme Gowda and Deve Gowda also thought along the same lines. While reading Tolstoy's WAR AND PEACE for the third time, he recorded in his diary that his India, the largest democracy in the world, had turned into a vast prison, a victim of Indira Gandhi's political ambitions and machinations, all inspired by her plan to impose Sanjay Gandhi on the country as her successor. His anguish was so intense that he wrote that it was better to be inside the prison than outside in the worse prison, which was India! He kept himself busy by going round the State to exhort people to struggle against Indira Gandhi's illegal and immoral regime.

The year 1977 opened with a pleasant surprise to all those like Nijalingappa who were anxious to see the return of a democratic polity and open society in India. Indira Gandhi, whatever her motives, announced in an unscheduled broadcast over the AIR, that elections would be held to elect a new Lok Sabha. This announcement was all the more surprising because the current Lok Sabha had still some twelve months to live legitimately. The Emergency was not immediately lifted but it was gradually relaxed. On 18 January 1977, President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, dissolved the fifth Lok Sabha. On January 18, 1977, the Emergency rule was relaxed by removing the censorship on the press and by providing the opposition parties a limited freedom to function. By the end of January 1977, most of the political detenues under MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act) were released. On 23 January 1977, a virtual political miracle occurred when the new Janata party, uniting all major opposition parties - originally Congress(O), Bharatiya Lok Dal (BLD), Jan Sangh and Socialist party - was

launched in New Delhi by Jayaprakash Narayan, the Sarvodaya leader. Morarji became its chairman and Charan Singh its Deputy Chairman. It had three General Secretaries - L.K.Advani (Jan Sangh), Surendra Mohan (Socialist Party), and Ram Dhan (Old Congress). It set a national committee of 27 members to function as the Party's Executive body and to organise its electoral strategy and its operation. Though Nijalingappa modestly underplayed his role in ,the formation of this momentous party, it is clear that as a key leader of Congress (O) he must have helped it merge with the new party. However, it is now in retrospect surprising and certainly unfair that Nijalingappa was not among the 27 members of the party's National Committee. It is also possible that he was not there by his own will. Events were happening with dramatic speed in 1977. On February 11, President Ahmed passed away at the age of 72, and B.D.Jatti, Vice President, assumed charge as Acting President under the constitutional provisions. A few days earlier on 2 February, Indira Gandhi received a serious political blow when Jagjivan Ram resigned from her Cabinet and the party, to form a new party called Congress For Democracy (CFD). The elections to the Sixth Lok Sabha were held between 16 and 20 March 1977. The results were a decisive rejection of Indira Gandhi, her party and especially her Emergency. Her Congress (I), now the only Congress, secured only 34.54 percent of votes, the lowest in the history of the Congress party. The Janata party secured a bare majority with 270 seats in a House of 539, but it had the support of two Communist parties (totalling together 29 seats) and the CFD (28 seats). The Congress certainly suffered a defeat but not one as spectacular as what one would expect. It won 153 seats which is sizeable number. But its defeat was qualitative in the sense that Indira Gandhi herself lost by the big margin of over 77,355 votes, her son Sanjay also lost, and as many as 34 members of her

Ministry lost! Thus there was no question that the vast, illiterate rural majority had shown the political wisdom to reject an autocratic political regime and the ruling clique. Indira Gandhi's Government resigned on 22 March 1977 and the new Lok Sabha was formally constituted on 23 March. Emergency itself was formally revoked by Acting President Jatti on 21 March. On 24 March 1977, Morarji became the Prime Minister, and Chavan became the Leader of the opposition. There is no need here to narrate in detail the course of Janata rule, excepting to make a general comment that it did not live upto the expectations of the people who had voted it to power. There were even political moves that were morally ambiguous such as the imposition of President's Rule on 9 states under the control of Opposition parties. On July 25, 1977, Sanjeeva Reddy became the President and he vacated his earlier post as the Speaker of Lok Sabha, which now went to K.S.Hegde of Karnataka.

Though Nijalingappa does not seem to have figured in the formal political scenario, it should not be taken to mean that he was out of grass-roots politics, that is, working among the people and with the people. Of course, occasionally he did offer advice to the Government at the Centre as a senior statesman of the Janata party. For instance, at the instance of Kriplani and I.K.Gujral, he advised Morarji on 20 November 1977 to take a friendly and co-operative attitude towards the USSR. When some friends asked him whether he was satisfied with Morarji as Prime Minister, Nijalingappa's blunt answer was that he was all right but that, from a political angle, Jagjivan Ram would have been a better choice. He said that he did not like Ram personally but he admired him for his efficiency! Among the shabby acts of the new Janata Government was the way it treated Nijalingappa. For instance,

on 17 April 1977, Morarji phoned the old leader in Chitradurga, asking him whether he would accept a Governorship! The only redeeming feature of this offer was that Morarji was apologetic that this was too small a thing for his stature but he was doing so only because some friends had urged him to do so. Without a moment's hesitation, Nijalingappa declined the offer and then suggested that they should approach Sadiq Ali and Nagappa Alva. He stated categorically that he was not interested in any formal office. For the same reason, he declined the offer made on 1st May 1977 to become the President of the newly created Janata Party. It was only after he declined that Chandrasekhar was elected as the President of the party. He now wanted to enter into a new political phase, that of a leader working close to the people in a truly Gandhian style, shunning all formal power and office. Its motto was serving the people, but this was also the motto which guided him in his career in formal institutional politics. There was thus no essential break but a break only in form. When the party asked him to serve as an observer for the party during the elections in Pondicherry and Tamil Nadu, he accepted the assignment as an humble party worker and later produced a report, explaining why the party had lost in the elections and offering suggestions to improve its performance.

In Karnataka, Nijalingappa was horrified at the extent of corruption that had invaded political and public life. He found the Congress (I) Government had reached the zenith of political and administrative corruption. Unable to stomach the spectacle, he wrote to the Centre to set up an enquiry commission into the corruption perpetrated by Urs and some of his colleagues. But as soon as Urs sensed the possibility of a Central commission against his Government, he tried to stall it and preempt it by announcing the appointment of his own

commission with Justice Iqbal Hussain as a one-man Commission. But the Urs-sponsored commission's scope was expanded to include the corruption charges against the earlier Nijalingappa and Veerendra Patil Ministries! The Karnataka High Court invalidated the appointment of Hussain Commission while the Justice Grover Commission appointed by the Centre, which had been challenged in the Supreme Court, received the seal of approval of the Apex Judiciary on 8th November 1977. On 21st May 1977, he wrote a letter to the Union Home Minister urging him to recall the Governor of Karnataka and dismiss the Government of Urs. The Centre responded by appointing the Grover Commission. He also wrote to his friend S.K. Patil, expressing the view that the new Janata regime could redeem the pledge it had made to the electorate only by enquiring into the crimes, including corruption, indulged in by the earlier Government and punish those found guilty. In his reply, Patil lamented that the Janata Government was ignoring them. Nijalingappa, in a characteristically non-chalant manner, wrote back to his friend that he was not bothered by the behaviour of the Janata party because he could always enjoy the quiet life of a non-public man, spending his time in reading, gardening and playing with grand-children ! Of course, Nijalingappa was too politically and morally committed a person to keep away from public life. He might change the mode of participation but he was not the one to shun public participation in some sense. In his reply, Patil expressed the view that the Janata rule had disappointed the people and he would retire into a purely private life. Though he was himself indifferent to public office, Nijalingappa wrote to Morarji a letter on 11th June 1977, suggesting that S.K.Patil and Ashok Mehta should be sent as ambassadors to America and Russia respectively in recognition of their services to the nation.

When Birla and Goenka and others suggested that he should step into the presidential position left vacant by Ahmed's death, for a fleeting moment, just one moment, he was moved by the desire for office. But soon he excided the thought from his mind and reflected that he could have become the President of India long ago if he had compromised with Indira Gandhi and abandoned his principles. When he visited Delhi on his way back from Calcutta where he had gone to attend the wedding of R.P. Goenka's grand-son, his friends S.N. Sinha, Nagappa Alva and GurupadaSwamy, suggested that they would work for his becoming the President provided he allowed them to do so. His reply was that he would rather work for Sanjeeva Reddy's candidature as the President because Reddy had earlier unfairly missed becoming one ! By then Sanjeeva Reddy was already engaged seriously in lobbying for the position. When he heard about it, Nijalingappa said he would support him. But Morarji was not happy with Reddy whom he regarded as a source of trouble. When GurupadaSwamy and others asked Morarji why he should not consider Nijalingappa for the job, Morarji replied that Nijalingappa had himself suggested Reddy's name and, moreover, Nijalingappa was a person with strong determination. Nijalingappa's friend told him that Morarji had rejected the suggestion that Nijalingappa should be made the President on the ground that one Lingayat was already occupying Number Two position and that it would be unfair to offer Number One job to another Lingayat ! Nijalingappa was amused at this exhibition of communalism and casteism. Nijalingappa read this as an indication of Morarji's unwillingness to have him as the President. Sanjeeva Reddy who was elected by the consensus of all parties was magnanimous enough to admit that he was lucky to be where Nijalingappa deserved better to be ! The person most disappointed at Nijalingappa not becoming the President was his friend S.K. Patil. He was also disappointed

with the Janata party because it contained too many desperate groups to generate a coherent policy frame-work. He was also worried at the waning of the Congress (O) influence within it and the waxing of the influence of the Jan Sangh. He suggested to Nijalingappa that he and other friends like P.C.Sen, S.N.Sinha and C.B. Gupta should get together to discuss the alternative. But Nijalingappa counselled patience as the Janata party would take some time to bring about a working harmony between the different groups within it. He told Patil that it was the duty of seniors like them to advise the party on right lines. In his letter to Nijalingappa dated 12th July 1977, Patil disagreed with Nijalingappa and wanted some quick action. He wanted the party to be saved from the strange hold of BLD; Jan Sangh. He said that they were getting old and they had no time for waiting. But Nijalingappa himself was no longer interested in formal institutional politics.

Back in Karnataka, Nijalingappa found the Janata Party in a bad shape, losing touch with the people. He was particularly unhappy with the State Janata President Veerendra Patil. But several Lingayat groups from North Karnataka approached him to prevail on him to continue Veerendra Patil as State Janata President. They also suggested an alternative, which was to get Patil a berth in the Central Cabinet. Nijalingappa was aware that Ramakrishna Hegde was working in tandem with Patil. What astonished Nijalingappa was the political craftiness of Patil, who had succeeded in enlisting his former enemies on his side ! But Nijalingappa did not waver in his conviction that Veerendra Patil had to be removed from the Presidentship of State Janata Party. He made it clear in a letter to Piloo Modi that the ruination of the party in the State was due to the conspiracy of three leaders - Veerendra Patil, Ramakrishna Hegde and Deve Gowda. He also added that Veerendra Patil

had been saying for the previous three years that he would give up the Presidentship but had not done it. He told Modi that the party did not have the support of SCs and STs and minorities, and that an SC like Y. Ramakrishna should replace Patil as the President of the State party. Out of power and holding no office, Nijalingappa continued to take keen interest in the welfare of the people, and he wrote to men in office asking them to promote schemes for the development of electricity and irrigation as the key to such welfare. He also addressed public meetings to educate the people about their rights as well as responsibilities. On 3rd August 1977, he phoned Morarji urging him to replace Patil who was growing unpopular day by day, and make Y.Ramakrishna the President. In fact, the feeling was growing among the Janata well-wishers in the State that the party was suffering due to the groupism built up by Patil, Hegde, Deve Gowda and Bommai. Anyway, Nijalingappa succeeded in getting Patil replaced but not by Ramakrishna. The new President was Deve Gowda. Morarji seems to have chosen him because Nijalingappa did not suggest his name ! There had never been any love lost between Morarji and Nijalingappa! During his visit to Delhi in September 1977, Nijalingappa suddenly took ill and was rushed to Wellingdon hospital where he got VIP treatment. On 29th September 1977, Indira Gandhi called on him in the hospital and enquired about his health and the welfare of his family.

The new President of the State Janata Party, Deve Gowda, met him to seek his blessings. Nijalingappa advised him to give up groupism and develop close contacts with the people. He himself undertook a tour of rural areas whenever he could, to keep in touch with the pulse of the people. For instance, from 25th September, 1977 to 27th September 1977, he carried the message of the Janata party to towns like Shiggaon, Savanur,

Mundargi, Mulgund, Naregal, Ron, Gajendragad and Annigeri, in North Karnataka. Everywhere he condemned the escalating corruption in government, and urged people to fight Urs Government which had virtually institutionalised corruption into a parallel Government ! He went on urging Morarji to dismiss Urs Government, and eventually succeeded in getting it removed and President's Rule imposed on Karnataka on 1st January 1978. Nijalingappa welcomed it and was happy that it coincided with the birth of the New Year. He exhorted the people to vote for the Janata Party in the coming elections. In the meanwhile, his friend S.K.Patil felt increasingly alienated from the Janata regime and complained to Nijalingappa that he was being deliberately bypassed. The correspondence between the two elder leaders is also interesting because it shows the radically different attitudes to power and office held by them. While Nijalingappa was totally indifferent to his personal political fortunes, Patil did not tolerate it and tried to rebuild Congress (O) as a separate organisation. Nijalingappa wrote to Chandrasekhar, the Janata President, to take note of the views expressed by S.K.Patil. But he found the response very disappointing. When Nijalingappa saw the list of Janata candidates, his anger knew no bounds when he found that it contained many unprincipled defectors. He guessed that this was the work of Hegde. Then he wrote a letter to Chandrasekhar stating that such undesirable development in the party made it impossible for him to continue in party politics. But nothing came out of his letter and his moral anger. As a man of principles, he had no option but to tender his resignation from the Janata party. Morarji urged him not to take a hasty decision. His friends and relatives tried hard to persuade Nijalingappa to withdraw the resignation. In a letter dated 1st February 1978, S.K.Patil congratulated his friend for resigning from the party and listed the wrongs done by the party. Patil repeated his litany of Janata crimes in his letters to

Nijalingappa during this time. He also referred to the fact that the chief gainer was Indira Gandhi who was attracting good crowd. His resignation was a great blow to the Janata Party because it made the people think that if a person of Nijalingappa's stature could resign, the party must be really in a bad shape, perhaps becoming another Congress (I) ! In his letters to Ashok Mehta, Nijalingappa wrote about his frustration and his desire to retire from politics. Mehta felt that it was a disaster for the country if persons like Nijalingappa contemplated retirement from political life. His resignation had the salutary effect of rousing the conscience of many people who wrote to him, condemning the way the Janata rule was going. Urs, perhaps with the intention of attracting Nijalingappa into his political camp, managed to meet Nijalingappa at his residence. Nijalingappa assured S.K.Patil that he would not be a party to any compromise with Indira Gandhi. As the elections in Karnataka approached, realising that Nijalingappa's resignation would have adverse effect on party's prospects in the elections, the Janata President Chandrasekhar visited him and tried to persuade him on 23rd February 1978 to withdraw his resignation. Disarmed by Chandrasekhar's sincerity and politeness, Nijalingappa reluctantly withdrew his letter of resignation. Morarji had also a hand in this development. But Nijalingappa was never quite reconciled to this decision of his. On 26th February, 1978, the election results were out, and the Janata party was completely routed. People accused the State Janata President Deve Gowda for the electoral disaster. But people also considered Ramakrishna Hegde jointly responsible for the electoral debacle. Actually, the Janata party could win only 59 seats as against 149 seats won by Indira Congress. But, of course, the real causes for this defeat were far more serious, not reducible to simplistic personal equations. The causes, simply put, were lack of unity, discipline and competence in the Janata party.

Before the election of the Janata party leader in the Assembly a meeting was held on 16th March 1978, when Ramakrishna Hegde, Veerendra Patil, Deve Gowda and Bommai called on Nijalingappa to discuss with him the leadership issue. They suggested the name of Bommai and Nijalingappa told them that the electoral defeat was due to the selection of defectors as Janata candidates. Nijalingappa advised them to pick up a person from Scheduled Caste or Backward Classes to lead the Party in the legislature. But Deve Gowda argued that the two prospective persons from these groups were LakshmiSagar and Thammaiah, but both these were inexperienced and raw in politics. Nijalingappa was not convinced by this argument, which he regarded as a lame excuse to have their way. Whenever Nijalingappa visited Delhi, he met President Sanjeeva Reddy and discussed with him the political scenario in the country. Reddy was very unhappy with the situation, and told Nijalingappa about Morarji's incompetence, arrogance and pretensions. Reddy also told Nijalingappa that he had suggested his name to Morarji for the Rajya Sabha but Morarji had wanted some other person. Reddy also criticised the incompetence of the Home Minister, Charan Singh, who had created many problems for the Government because of his mishandling of issues. Day by day, Nijalingappa's frustration with the Janata regime was increasing, and he thought that Chandrasekhar did not have the wherewithal to tackle the worsening political situation. He wrote a blunt letter to Chandrasekhar about the plight of the party, and sent copies of it to other leaders like Charan Singh, Atal Behari Vajpayee and Jagjivan Ram. During his visit to Delhi in April 1978, both the President and PM tried to persuade him to accept the Governorship of Gujarat. Some Central Ministers also requested him to accept the suggestion. But Nijalingappa, instead of discussing this offer, engaged the leaders in a discussion of the depths of depravity

to which the party had fallen. He had to listen to complaints made by the leaders against each other, and also to the public opinion that the party was getting a bad name because of the upper hand gained by the Jan Sangh group within the party. After returning from Delhi, he told his wife Murigemma about the offer of Governorship. As a befitted wife of Nijalingappa, she rightly saw through the offer as an attempt to silence him and urged him to reject it forthwith, which he did formally through a telegraphic message to the PM and the Home Minister.

With every passing day, Nijalingappa saw the Janata Party moving along the path of self-destruction, and he had no illusions about the future of the party. On 22nd June 1978, he visited JP in Patna and discussed with him the political situation, which was worsening day by day. JP agreed with Nijalingappa's negative assessment of the Janata regime, but he expressed his helplessness to do anything about it. The internal squabbles within the party reached a boiling point when Charan Singh made open allegations against PM's son, Kanti Desai. Nijalingappa was critical of the way PM's son was misusing his position as a son of the PM. The party ran into a crisis when Charan Singh and Raj Narain tendered their resignations from the Government on 30th June 1978. S.K. Patil again wrote to Nijalingappa that the situation demanded that the two Congresses should unite and Congress (O) should make an exit from the Janata conglomerate. Nijalingappa did not, as usual, agree, but this did not affect their deep friendship. Another issue that attracted Nijalingappa's attention was the issue of neglect of the South in national politics. In fact, he wrote to Morarji a letter suggesting that the Union Cabinet should have a fairer representation for the South by the induction into it of leaders like C.M. Poonacha and K.C. Abraham. Nijalingappa turned into a one-man army against political

corruption and opportunism. In fact, when in July 1978, the Janata party supported the shaky Congress (I) Government of Sharad Pawar in Maharashtra, Nijalingappa openly condemned this political opportunism. S.K. Patil resigned from Janata party and, in his letter dated 21st July 1978, he explained to Nijalingappa that the resignation was prompted by Morarji's personal jealousy and Chandrasekhar's politicking. He also informed Nijalingappa that he had written to Indira Gandhi to revive the old Congress but he was not hopeful because she was under the evil influence of her son, Sanjay. But, of course, Nijalingappa did not see eye to eye with his friend on his political decisions. When there were rumours in August 1977 about Chandrasekhar's resignation from the presidentship of Janata party, friends like C.R. Basappa wrote to him to consider the possibility of his taking over the presidentship to cleanse the party of all the political filth that had accumulated in the recent months. As they must have expected Nijalingappa said a firm "no" to such overtures. It was agonising for the ageing leader to watch helplessly the disintegration of the party created to fight Indira Gandhi's dictatorship and promote the well-being of the nation. He spent the whole of August 1978 in Delhi to meet the various Janata leaders and bring them together into a working relationship. He responded to every development anywhere in the country with an alertness which none of the more directly involved leaders showed ! He never failed to express his reactions to them in press statements. For instance, when he heard about the June 1978 killings in Bihar in connection with the Panchayat elections there, Nijalingappa wrote to the papers about his feelings and also wrote a letter to the PM about it. The then Chief Minister of Bihar, Karpoori Thakur denied that the number of the killed was as large as that claimed by Nijalingappa but was only 58. He further regretted that senior and responsible leaders like Nijalingappa

should have verified the facts before issuing such statements. Nijalingappa responded to this statement in a letter written to Thakur dated 15th August 1978. First, he commented that political leaders did not now know where and when to use the term "irresponsibility" He explained that he had got the figures not just from hearsay but during his visit to Patna to see JP, when no less a person than the secretary of Bihar Janata party and even some ministers had given him the facts. Nijalingappa asked whether they could be called irresponsible ! Thakur replied to say that there was no evidence about thousands being killed and that the police had to open fire to allow Backward Class voters to vote when they were forcibly prevented from doing so. He said he was prepared to face any enquiry commission. The Janata regime was getting more and more embroiled in the scandal about PM's son, Kanti Desai. Nijalingappa knew that there was truth in these allegations but he refused to intervene. He told his friends that it was futile to intervene in a situation which had gone beyond recovery. Every leader in the party was a law unto himself and the pro-Brahmin Jan Sangh was trying to gain total control over the party. The Congress (O), which was the backbone of the party, was being increasingly side-lined.

Indira Gandhi planned to stage a come-back into politics and wanted to re-enter the Lok Sabha. The Congress (I) Government of Urs in Karnataka obliged her by having the Chikmagalur Parliamentary seat vacated by the incumbent D.B.Chandre Gowda so that she could contest for it in a by-election. Veerendra Patil group was keen on Patil standing against Indira Gandhi. The group consisting of Bommai and others started to visit Nijalingappa in Chitradurga to get his approval for their idea. It was ironical that Bommai who was reported to have described Nijalingappa to Mehta as a cypher

in Karnataka politics should now consider him important enough to be approached! Nijalingappa, setting aside his personal views, campaigned for Patil in the by-election. But the entire resources of Congress(I) Government in Karnataka were poured into the by-election to ensure that Indira Gandhi was elected. Indira won the election to make a triumphant re-entry into the Lok Sabha. In explaining the failure in the by-election, Nijalingappa informed Morarji that it was due to the non-performance of the Janata Government and its glaring inability to fulfil the promises made in the elections. He also felt that the only way the party could be saved was to replace the leadership of the old guard like Morarji by younger persons. But he had little hope of this happening. Indira Gandhi's triumph proved to be short-lived as a few days after her taking oath as a member of the Lok Sabha she was legally disqualified from the membership of the House. While this was a development that made Nijalingappa happy, there were others that made him unhappy as signs of Janata party's downfall. Of these, the most significant was the spectacular show of Kulak power demonstrated by Charan Singh to cut Morarji to size. Nijalingappa was unhappy that this show was staged by rich landlords who gave Charan Singh a gift of 77 lakh rupees. The show took place in Delhi on 23 December 1978 when five lakh farmers gathered to celebrate Charan Singh's birth-day. Nijalingappa regarded this crude display of populism an exact repetition of Indira Gandhi's populistic politics. Indira Gandhi's expulsion from the Parliament provoked her supporters all over the country to organise demonstrations and other forms of protests against the Government, often indulging in violence. In Nijalingappa's district of Chitradurga itself, Indira followers destroyed crops in the countryside, set fire to poor huts, throwing stones at houses. This kind of violence occurred everywhere in the country and it did not spare even the

Parliament. Leaders like Diwakar and Justice Tarkunde planned to counter this turn towards violence in politics and public life, by organising a forum against it. They invited Nijalingappa to attend the preparatory meetings to be held in Delhi on 21 and 22 January 1979. Consistent in his attitude towards the issue of taking up formal office and power, Nijalingappa continued to spurn invitations to join organizations as their head. One such was an offer to be the president of a rural foundation in Jodhpur. Nijalingappa politely declined the offer.

Against the background of declining credibility of the Janata Party and its Government, S.K.Patil urged Nijalingappa to unite the two Congresses under Indira Gandhi's leadership in the interest of the nation. In his letter to his friend dated 1st January 1979, Nijalingappa counselled patience. He suggested that they should wait a little longer before embarking on any programmatic decision. But Patil persisted in the idea of Congress unity and issued a press statement on 5th January 1979 to explain its necessity and modality. Nijalingappa did not react to this either way. Patil wrote to him to say that he had no respect for Indira Gandhi personally but that she had mass appeal and support. She represented a relatively better bet than the crumbling Janata structure. The internal rivalries in the Janata party became more intensified day by day. The rivalry between Morarji and Charan Singh was temporarily contained with the decision to create two posts of Deputy PMs, and make both Charan Singh and Jagjivan Ram Deputy Prime Ministers. This arrangement was arrived at on 23rd January 1979. Of course, this did not really solve the crisis. Charan Singh declared that he would fight the Government from within while Raj Narain declared that he would fight from outside. All this made Nijalingappa very sad. In March 1979 election to the presidentship of the Karnataka State Janata party was

to take place. Nijalingappa's political status, inspite of his being outside the formal power structure, can be measured by the fact all aspirants for the president's post sought his support. But Nijalingappa suggested in vain that a person from the Backward Classes should be chosen. Without his knowledge, Nijalingappa himself was among the 28 elected to the National Committee of the party. However, when he saw that there was none from SC group in the list, Nijalingappa resigned from the membership of this Committee. He refused to be persuaded to withdraw his resignation. In the gathering of political darkness that was engulfing the country, Nijalingappa saw only one bright spot, and that was Jayaprakash Narayan. He considered JP as next only to Gandhiji in terms of moral stature. JP's deteriorating health worried Nijalingappa who hoped against hope that the Lok Nayak would survive. When he was about to start his lunch on 22 March 1979, Nijalingappa got the news of JP's death. He abandoned his meal and immediately phoned the press to check the truth of the news broadcast by the AIR. After the news was confirmed, he contacted press to register his profound grief. He declared that JP was next only to Gandhiji as the conscience keeper of the nation. Morarji offered even condolence in the Lok Sabha, but the incompetence of the Government was exposed when it came to know that JP was still alive! Nijalingappa was overjoyed to hear that the news of the great leader's death was unfounded.

The Janata party in Karnataka was in disarray, torn by internal conflicts between power-hungry and self-oriented leaders. In this, the party was no better or worse than the Congress and it was equally characterised by corruption, indiscipline, communalism and casteism. The State party President visited Nijalingappa one morning with Thimme Gowda, to keep the old leader informed about the goings on

in the party. Deve Gowda, who was the State party President, narrated to Nijalingappa in detail the political game played by Veerendra Patil. He said that Patil was ready to split the party in his self-interest, and was scheming eventually to defect to Indira camp. But Nijalingappa had already seen through Patil's power game during the last five or six years, and this was no news to him. Gowda also informed Nijalingappa that Urs had his own game-plan. It was to join hands with Charan Singh by managing the defection of one hundred legislators and, with their help, start a new party in the State. Nijalingappa told Gowda that these developments were the result of Morarji refusing to heed his advice. But then it should be remembered in fairness to Veerendra Patil, that in what he did he was behaving like the ordinary run of politicians in India. But Nijalingappa could never forgive Patil for sacrificing the interest of the party for his personal political ambitions. But with that instinctive sense of fairness so characteristic of him, he recognised the positive qualities of Patil such as his administrative experience, managerial skill and intelligence. That was why he welcomed the news that his protege was likely to go as the Governor of Bihar. Of course, he was also happy that an unwanted politician would be removed from the State politics! Charan Singh-Morarji rivalry wrecked the Janata party. Charan Singh was bent on becoming Prime Minister but Morarji was the main obstacle to his ambition. Thanks to the behind-the-scene manoeuvers of Charan Singh, Chavan introduced a no-confidence motion against Morarji in the Lok Sabha on 15 July 1979. Many well-wishers of the party urged Nijalingappa to intervene as an elderly statesman to save the party. Nijalingappa got in touch with Morarji through telephone and tried to find out the facts. Morarji, backed by astrological support, resigned from Prime Ministership on the same day, but he did not resign from the leadership of the Janata Parliamentary

party. Earlier, on 9th July 1979, Raj Narain had broken away from the Janata party taking with him nine members of Lok Sabha. Apparently with the blessings of Charan Singh, he formed Janata (S). Morarji did not recommend dissolution of Lok Sabha. Charan Singh approached the President, Sanjeeva Reddy, to allow him to form a Government. Singh assured the President that he would demonstrate his majority in the Lok Sabha. Reddy asked him to prove his majority by the third week of August 1979. Nijalingappa speculated that it was not impossible that Indira Gandhi would extend her enemy Charan Singh her opportunistic friendship but withdraw it later! Reddy who did not like Morarji, was obviously keen on seeing Charan Singh to become the PM. Nijalingappa felt that Sanjeeva Reddy's action led to the disintegration of the party and to the eventual victory of Indira Gandhi. Reddy, however, had not invited Charan Singh first, and it was only after Chavan, the leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha had expressed his inability to form a Government, that he had asked Charan Singh to form the Government. Charan Singh agreed to do so because he thought he had the backing of 75 members from Chavan's group. He was formally sworn-in as Prime Minister on 28th July 1979, heading a coalition of Janata (S), Socialists and Congress (I). But even before seeking a vote of confidence in the Lok Sabha because he was sure he would not get it, as Congress (I) withdrew its support, Charan Singh resigned from Prime Ministership on 20th August 1979. Singh also recommended dissolution of Lok Sabha. Thus his short-lived Government of 23 days came to an end. This record was beaten by Atal Behari Vajpayee whose Prime-Ministership in 1996 was even briefer, lasting just one week. Nijalingappa himself thought that if Jagjivan Ram, instead of Charan Singh, had been asked by the President to form a government, the situation would have been under control from the perspective of Janata Party.

Nijalingappa, puzzled by Morarji's not resigning from leadership of the Parliamentary party while resigning from Prime-Ministership, sent a telegram to Morarji to resign from leadership of the Janata Parliamentary party on 19 July 1979. Nijalingappa unburdened his grief in a letter he wrote to JP on 20 July 1979. In it, he reiterated his view that the only way to save the party was to make Jagjivan Ram the Prime Minister. He added that he did not personally like Ram but his objective assessment was that he would be the right person to hold that position. He considered Chandrasekhar, if he could muster support, to be equally acceptable to him. When Reddy invited Charan Singh to form the Government, Nijalingappa felt that it did not establish a good precedent and tradition. When the national political situation was becoming a farce with Charan Singh heading a coalition, S.K.Patil urged Nijalingappa to break his political alliance and re-organise Congress (O) in a letter dated 28th July 1979. In his reply Nijalingappa raised the crucial question of whether it was at all now possible to identify who really belonged to the congress (O) ! In Karnataka, the political atmosphere was getting equally polluted. What Nijalingappa was expecting for quite some time occurred when Veerendra Patil left the Janata Party and joined the Congress (I). Nijalingappa welcomed it as good riddance. A few days before Charan Singh resigned, Jagjivan Ram requested telegraphically Nijalingappa to meet him in Delhi for some important discussion. Accordingly, he went to Delhi on 20th August 1979. The following day Ram indicated to Nijalingappa his desire to become the PM. Since Reddy was obliged to Nijalingappa for earlier political support during critical junctures, Ram felt that Nijalingappa was the right person to influence the President. Nijalingappa had from the start wanted Ram to be the PM because that was the only way to counter Indira Gandhi's hold on the SC constituency. Now he thought

he could do something about it and met Reddy to plead Ram's case. But Reddy argued that the only way out was mid-term elections. Nijalingappa tried to convince Reddy that this would work against the interest of the Janata Party. Reddy did not agree with Nijalingappa who thought that Reddy was now moving closer to Indira Gandhi. Considering the harm she had earlier done to him, Reddy's behaviour struck Nijalingappa at the height of political opportunism! But then he also knew that Indian political culture was now becoming increasingly opportunistic with politicians oriented towards the twin goals of political power and money-making! On 28th August 1979, the President announced the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. He also requested Charan Singh to continue as the care-taker PM. With his far sight, Nijalingappa predicted that the elections would help Indira Gandhi to return to power. While S.K.Patil, disgusted with the antics of the Janata leaders, began to praise Indira as preferable to the knaves and fools who dominated the Janata Party. Nijalingappa remained consistent in his condemnation of Indira Gandhi and her political machinations. As before, this did not affect the personal friendship between the two senior leaders.

With the elections a certainty, the political landscape became fluid, inviting opportunistic alignments. In Karnataka, a new political party called Congress (U) headed by Urs was formed. S.K.Patil urged Ram to join Congress (I). The worst hit was the old Congress (O) group which was totally disoriented. The BJP and the Socialist groups managed to maintain their identity. In Karnataka, the State Janata Party turned to Nijalingappa for guidance in organising its campaign in the elections. He worked hard to campaign for the party in spite of his age and failing health. Physically exhausted, he had to be hospitalised in November 1979. Nijalingappa predicted

that Indira Gandhi would win easily because the opposition was totally fragmented. The elections to the 7th Lok Sabha took place on 3rd and 6th January 1980. Indira Gandhi's Congress (I) swept the polls to gain an impressive two-thirds majority. The Congress (I) won 351 seats out of a total of 525, Janata trailing behind with a mere 31. Lok Dal did better with 41. The Congress (U) got 13, while the CPI and CPM won respectively 10 and 35 seats. The DMK won 16, while the AIDMK got 2. The Muslim League, the Akali Dal and the National Conference got 3,1 and 3 respectively. Independent candidates won only 4, while the smaller parties got together 14 seats. Indira Gandhi herself won in two constituencies, Rae Bareli in UP and Medak in Andhra, with spectacular margins. She was sworn-in as Prime Minister on 14th January 1980, and thus the New Year began with a bang for her. In Karnataka, Urs resigned as Congress (U) Chief Minister on 7th January 1980, owning responsibility for the miserable performance of Congress (U), in the Lok Sabha elections. But he did not recommend dissolution of the Assembly, and thus R.Gundu Rao assumed office as the new Congress (I) Chief Minister. On 19th February 1980, Indira Gandhi dismissed the governments of nine States controlled by non-congress (I) parties on grounds identical to those offered by the Janata Party when it had earlier dismissed nine non-Janata State governments. While basking in her political victory, she was struck with great personal tragedy when her favourite son, Sanjay Gandhi, died in an aeroplane crash. But keen on continuing dynastic rule, she started to groom her other son, Rajiv Gandhi, to become her eventual successor. She also revived her old political style of controlling the party and the State Governments, and, in this, she was greatly assisted by the shocking political sycophancy exhibited by her party men, not excluding Chief Ministers. Profoundly depressed by this revival of authoritarian rule Nijalingappa asked himself on 15th

August 1980, the Independence Day, who became Independent on that day ! His entry in the diary on that day is a blunt indictment of the thirty years of Independent India. He noted that the common man, especially the poor farmers and workers, continued to be as badly off as before, perhaps even worse off. The fruits of freedom were being enjoyed by a handful of the upper crust - Ministers, members of the ruling party, the bureaucracy at all levels. The industrialists were also having it good. The urban workers were marginally better off than rural workers. The percentage of those below poverty line was around 65. After Indira Gandhi came to power, the disparity between the rich and the poor had widened, and everybody from the PM down mouthed Gandhian slogans while indulging in corruption. All unhealthy forces, including communal forces and foreign infiltration were wrecking the country. In Karnataka itself, these evils were reaching an alarming proportion. When the legislators openly make allegations against a minister, Ibrahim, the CM shamelessly defended his allegedly corrupt and criminal colleague ! On 9th July 1981, a mammoth meeting was held under Nijalingappa's presidentship in Chitradurga to demand action against the accused minister. Nijalingappa voiced his profound sorrow and said that persons like Ibrahim against whom there were serious allegations were ruling the country everywhere. Around this time, famine conditions prevailed in the districts and the Government did nothing except visiting places in helicopters at great expense ! His appeal to the Government to work out a permanent structural solution to the problem of famine fell on deaf ears. The escalating political corruption and the scandalous amassing of wealth by politicians in power, made Nijalingappa's blood boil, but he felt helpless. He was convinced that all this took place with the blessings of top leadership.

In Karnataka, Devaraj Urs, out of office and power, went round the State to tell the people what was happening in the country and the State. He had now become wiser and more morally sensitive through declining political fortunes. He tried to condemn Indira Gandhi's rule and canvass support for his party. He addressed a large rally in Chitradurga also. Though corruption was rampant under his Chief-Ministership and he himself had been allegedly corrupt, people rallied to his meetings because his Government had taken concrete steps to improve the lot of backward classes. Nijalingappa recalled in his diary entry for 24th September 1981 that Urs had left Organisation Congress to join Indira Gandhi's Congress in 1971. Under her tutelage, he had built up a corrupt political regime in the State. It was he who had nurtured politically questionable leaders like Gundu Rao. But now Urs was condemning Indira Gandhi and Gundu Rao of precisely those very crimes which he had first initiated. After prior arrangement, Urs met Nijalingappa during his Chitradurga visit on 25th September 1981 at 10 A.M. They spent nearly an hour discussing the issue of organising a powerful opposition party against Indira Gandhi. Nijalingappa told Urs that the Janata experiment had failed because every constituent group went its own way, and its leaders worked within to strengthen their groups rather than promote the national interest. He pointed out that while there was a negative unity against Indira Gandhi, there was no unity during the election time when the groups engaged in an internal struggle. Urs informed Nijalingappa that he was ready to join any party and that he had already had discussions with Morarji, Chandrasekhar and Charan Singh. Urs said that Charan Singh had declared that he had no interest now in Prime-Ministership and that he would back any effort at uniting the opposition groups. Nijalingappa replied that Charan Singh could not be trusted because he was a highly self-oriented person. Urs

informed Nijalingappa further that a former State President of Janata Party now spent entire days in Gundu Rao's residence, and had moved very close to Rao politically. Nijalingappa already knew about it and he told Urs that person lacked all credibility. The Janata episode in the political history of modern post-colonial India remained a tragic memory. No party had been born with such high hopes and it had belied every hope. In a sense, the ascendancy of Indira Gandhi and the disintegration of the Janata Party in early 1980s can be, for the sake of narrative convenience, regarded as marking the end of an active phase of Nijalingappa's political and public career. It would, however, be a grave mistake to suppose that Nijalingappa did not take interest in politics or public life after this marker. As we shall see in the next chapter, his political and public involvement continued, though at a different pace and employing a different operational mode.

When one looks back at the Congress split and the subsequent Janata experiment from the perspective of Nijalingappa's role, as one needs must one can piece together a distinctive image of Nijalingappa's politics as well as personality. In fact, he was among the very few leaders of this period whose transparence virtually wiped out the distinction between the personal and the public. The bane of Indian political leadership, cutting across party lines, had been and continues to be the separation of the two aspects and the systematic subordination of public interest to the personal and the private. Perhaps even at the cost of alienating himself from his family, he demonstrated a selfless commitment to collective public interest, whether that of the region or the nation. He realised that both the region and the nation were interdependent, and neither could be sacrificed at the cost of the other. Of course, he was prepared to concede that, in the final analysis, the

national interest should override other interests. But normally he wanted a reasonable balance between the two within the framework of a liberal, parliamentary democratic political system. But, above all, he was committed to a politics of morally constituted principles. In this sense, he represented what may be called a truly Gandhian political culture. His role in the complex event called the Congress Split can be seen as an attempt to uphold principled politics, a politics committed to liberal democratic political values as well as higher moral values of truth and humanism, against forces that were conspiring to destroy such a politics. He saw Indira Gandhi as a major force against the kind of politics he cherished as an ideal in the footsteps of Gandhiji. Of all those who opposed her politically, the most consistent and the most principled was undoubtedly Nijalingappa. He could have promoted either Congress unity or his own self-interest, if he had compromised with Indira Gandhi. But that would have gone against the grain. His contribution to the creation of the Janata party and his subsequent support to it were inspired by the same allegiance to values and principles he had imbibed in the Gandhian school of politics! His later distancing from the formal, institutional politics of the Janata party was also an off-shoot of his unswerving commitment to principles and values. Many have wondered, perhaps not excluding Nijalingappa himself, how a person with such a frame of mind could survive in the world of politics where the only principle that guided the actors was absence of principle. No doubt his survival in the post-Independence jungle of anti-Gandhian politics involved a great personal cost. He paid it cheerfully, thus serving as an example of how political morality can be maintained in an amoral and immoral universe of politics of power and naked opportunism. Indeed, he serves as a hope to those who refuse to succumb to the lure of power and office. May be their number is small

and diminishing, but Nijalingappa's life is an illustration of the fact that such persons are always there. This comment is not meant to idealise Nijalingappa but only meant to show that idealism is still a valid mode of operation in politics. But it would be an error to confuse idealism with utopian impracticality. In fact, like his mentor, Gandhiji, Nijalingappa was a very practical man, paying meticulous attention to details of organization. Gandhiji solved the eternal conflict between the need for morality and the need for skill in politics by subordinating political skill to political morality. More importantly, he did this by drawing an operational distinction between basic principles and secondary principles. This enabled him to remain uncompromisingly committed to basic principles, while allowing flexibility with regard to secondary principles. Nijalingappa can be said to have practised in his own way, if not as lucidly, this same Gandhian political paradigm.

# 7. THE NEW PHASE : POLITICS OF CONSCIENCE AND CONSCIOUSNESS

When this biographer asked Nijalingappa very recently if he could indicate roughly when he retired from active politics, the old lion roared, "Who says that I retired from active politics? It is part of my life, inseparable from it. How can I retire from it?" This spirited answer set him thinking, and the biographer began to work out the implications of his subject's spontaneous outburst! The result was the title of this Chapter. We usually make a distinction between active politics and non-active politics. This distinction turns on the distinction between involvement in ongoing current politics as an active participant and a concern for ongoing politics as a spectator, from a distance, as it were. Anyone who has seen him at ninetysix trying to move across this vast land, despite his failing health, to assemble like-minded persons to initiate an institutionalised struggle against such monstrous evils of current politics in the country as corruption, will have to concede that Nijalingappa has certainly continued to be actively involved in current politics. What has altered is the locus of his active politics and the targets of his politics. Roughly, after the political disintegration and death of the old Janata conglomerate at the end of 1970s, he has shifted the locus of his politics from the space occupied by the establishment of institutions such as the government and the political parties, to where the victims of these institutional tyrannies are located, the space where the ordinary folk live, fighting their daily battles for survival. The targets now are no longer acquisition and exercise of institutional power of the State but the strengthening of the people's

conscience against the immoralities that have invaded our political life, and the creation of a political consciousness among them, that can serve as a prelude to their politics of questioning and limiting the politics of the rulers who control state power. Having been an insider in that other political space, Nijalingappa is perhaps best qualified to counter it by mobilising space, the people against the mal-functioning of that politics. In short, from around the close of the 1970s, Nijalingappa has been practising and continues to practise what may be called the politics of conscience and consciousness. It is a fitting shift for a leader who is among the very few whose Gandhian commitments have survived the temptations of post-Independence Indian politics. However, it needs to be underscored that the shift in the mode of political action does not mean any shift in essential moral and ideological commitment. For instance, it does not mean that Nijalingappa did not practise a politics of conscience and consciousness in his earlier political career. What it means is simply that the institutional framework of that commitment was different, its mode was different but its content was not different. In other words, the two modes of political activity imply no rupture but an essential continuity.

One manifestation of this activity is Nijalingappa's active association with institutions working at the national level in the field of national reconstruction and national development. These include Sardar Vallabhai Memorial Trust in New Delhi, the National Memorial Trust for Lal Bahadur Shastri, Dreams and Realities Society, Sucheta Memorial Fund, Haridwar, Karnataka Dharmashala Society, Srinivasa Mallya Memorial Society, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and countless others. In fact, he was instrumental in the establishment of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Centre in Bangalore. The Bhavan paid a handsome tribute to him by celebrating Nijalingappa's 94th Birthday on

10 December 1995. On this occasion, which also happened to be the 30th anniversary of the Kendra in Bangalore, Nijalingappa paid his tribute to the Bhavan for popularising Indian culture on a global scale and blessed it. Another organisation which received Nijalingappa's active support and encouragement is the Anathasevashrama, founded and run by a remarkable person, Raghavendra Swami, at Malladihalli in Holalkere Taluka in Karnataka. This was an exemplary illustration of how the overall development of a community - physical, mental, moral and spiritual can be achieved by a non-governmental institution. These are some of the institutions - an illustrative sample - which Nijalingappa took keen interest in as part of his contribution to public life in the eighties. Apart from this association with public-oriented bodies, he was also involved in continuous contacts with the people who flocked to him for advice and guidance. He also took up the cause of the people with the powers that be, and thus demonstrated his commitment to the welfare of the common man. In line with his profound interest in Indian rural life, he extended substantial help to the Banavasi Valaya Abhyudaya Samiti, an organisation established in Banavasi in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka in 1982 to promote the all-round development of this somewhat backward region. In particular, he helped this organisation to start a Rural Development Training Institute, which is sponsored by the premier educational society in North Karnataka, the KLE Society. He took up this cause with the State and Central Governments. Throughout the 1980s Nijalingappa continued this activity of reaching out to the people on a wide variety of occasions, and he used this opportunity to explain to the ordinary people the plight of the country, teach them the values and ideals of his vision of principled and morally informed politics, and finally urged them to act in the cause of such politics. In this Chapter, our aim is not to give an account of

each and every occasion, but to document only a few illustrative cases to emphasise the nature of the new politics of conscience and consciousness in which the old statesman became involved. On 8th March 1983, he was asked to lay the foundation stone for the Janata party office building in Guledgud. On this occasion, he made a suggestion which is worth consideration by all those desiring a healthy political life. Since there is no formal retirement age for politicians, and perhaps rightly so, there is a strong temptation for them to continue in politics even after their utility has been exhausted, and also thus block the progress of younger persons with legitimate claims. Even more interestingly, Nijalingappa advised senior politicians to quit active politics voluntarily, and take on the new role of being guides to younger politicians. Incidentally, whether Nijalingappa realised it or not, this suggestion is in tune with the classical Indian theory of Ashramas of life. Each ashrama is defined in terms of the functions appropriate to it, and the individual person is enjoined to go through all of them with equal commitment. He also took this occasion as an opportunity to condemn communalism (*jatiyate*) and urged the people to follow the ideal of secularism in politics. Further, he told the State Government to complete all of its projected big irrigation schemes. Otherwise, he warned, the people would vote the Government out. A year later, he participated in the Second Annual Session of the Janata Party at Jayaprakashnagar in Patna on 9th March 1984. He spoke on the occasion and, in his speech, he condemned the Congress (I) Government then in power for its authoritarianism, and urged the opposition parties with compatible goals to unite and defeat the Government. In fact, he welcomed the move then being made by the party President, Chandrasekhar, to forge such a unity in the interest of democracy and national integrity. Referring to the failure of the Janata Party in running the Government at the Centre, he attributed it to the selfish

ambitions of its leaders. On 25th March 1984, Nijalingappa presided over the ceremony of the 12th anniversary of the inauguration of Mahanta Swamiji in Ilkal. When the function was just about to come to an end, Nijalingappa found himself unexpectedly being garlanded by a live snake by the Bagewadi Swamiji, who was popularly known as snake Swami or Haavina Swami. The Swami took out a live snake from a basket full of cobras, and garlanded Nijalingappa with one! The Swamiji urged Nijalingappa to handle the snakes, but he was naturally reluctant to do so. The snakes returned quietly to the basket, and the press photographers were happy to click their cameras to document this unique mode of garlanding a leader. In fact, an issue of the Kannada daily, Samyukta Karnatak, carried a picture of this, with the caption, Sarpa Bhushana, or One Decorated with a Snake, which is also one of the names given to Shiva.

On 6th March 1985, about a year later, he announced his formal resignation from the membership of the Janata Party, thus formalising a position that was there for the past few years. He talked to the PTI telephonically from Chitradurga about it. He explained that he was resigning from the party to gain the freedom to criticise the functioning of all parties without any inhibition. When he was asked whether it had anything to do with his dissatisfaction, if any, with the Janata Government then in power in Karnataka, Nijalingappa did not hesitate to assert that the Janata Government had performed well, better than the Government of Indira Gandhi or Rajiv Gandhi. He said he wanted to be a non-party person. In fact, he had resigned earlier from the party in 1978- but then it was due to his clear dissatisfaction with the leaders of the Janata party at the Centre. At that time, he was persuaded to withdraw it.

The year 1985 was the Centenary year of the birth of the Indian National Congress, and hence it was an occasion for

celebrating the Congress Centenary. But where was the Original Congress to celebrate it? Who had the right to celebrate it? Could Congress (I), a fragment of a fragmented Original Congress, claim this right? Or should it be a non-party or all-party celebration, a genuinely national celebration? The occasion raised such complicated considerations. Talking to the press on 4th May 1985, Nijalingappa was naturally worried by these issues. He declared that he would refuse to participate in the proposed Congress Centenary Celebrations, if invited. However, he had not been so far invited and hence the question of his participation did not arise. He argued that he would not participate because there was no longer any real Congress in existence. What did exist was only Indira Congress. He recalled with visible pride the glorious past of the Congress and the galaxy of its past leaders. He was also proud that he had the privilege of presiding over it. He accused Indira Gandhi of destroying the Congress. Now there were as many Congresses as the number of letters in the English alphabet. In fact, the Centenary Celebrations were inaugurated on 5th May 1985 by Rajiv Gandhi. He regretted that some senior leaders had refused to participate in it. Presumably, this included Nijalingappa. Later, the Celebrations were inaugurated in Bangalore on 26th September 1985 by Sheila Kaul.

A World Meet of Kannada language and culture, the Vishva Kannada Sammelana, was inaugurated by the State poet laureate, Kuvempu or K.V.Puttappa, in Mysore, the cultural capital of the State, on 15th December 1985, and it was scheduled to go on till 17th December 1985. The World Kannada Meet organised several seminars and symposia on set topics and themes. One such was the Seminar on Karnataka's Political Tradition, and it was appropriately chaired by Nijalingappaa who seemed to have emphasised the inter-faith

amity and religious tolerance of this tradition. On 20th March 1986, Nijalingappa presided over the inauguration ceremony of the Kalyanamantapa (Marriage Hall) of the Raita Bhavana of Khanapur Taluka Agricultural Marketing Society in Nandgad, a small place some 35 Kms away from Belgaum. On this occasion, he returned to the themes close to his heart - agricultural development and irrigation and felt sorry that the big irrigation projects initiated by his Government had not yet been completed by the succeeding Governments. He had started them as Chief Minister in 1964, and there was no reason why they should not have been completed at the latest by 1974 ! When completed they would have provided water for 50 lakh acres of land, and yielded annually crops worth two crore rupees. On this occasion, he also released the biography of his friend and great freedom-fighter, Late Basappanna Aragavi. Referring again to irrigation projects, he cited the exemplary and single-minded way in which the Andhra Government had completed the Nagarjuna Sagar project, which had provided the State enough rice to export to other states. On 8th June 1986, Nijalingappa presided over a seminar in Bangalore on Guru Darshana, organised by the heads of Veerashaiva Mathas, as part of the Jagajyoti Basaveswara Celebrations under the auspices of F.G. Halkatti Forum. The Seminar was held in Lalbagh. Speaking on the occasion, he urged the Veerashaiva Swamijis to practise Dasoha and work for the removal of ignorance among the poor and the destitute. He told the religious heads that, if they were true followers of Basaveswara, they should go to their devotees and study their problems. They should keep away from the rich, and only then they could claim to be fulfilling the vows of *Sangharakshana*. He cited the example of Kanchi Kamakoti Swamiji who walked miles to visit his devotees. Nijalingappa poured scorn on the venality of some religious heads. One of them wanted only foreign cars. In

another Matha, there was an in-fight over its monetary resources which were around three crore rupees ! He claimed that he was bold enough to speak out his mind without fear. He said he was not worried if it made people angry. In a general critique of the mal-functioning of Veerashaiva religious institutions, he regretted that some Swamijis had started collecting donations to establish colleges. They were diverting the money donated to satisfy their personal needs. He asked them, "Is this your personal money?" He was being brutally frank because he was daily confronting the miserable plight of the common people. He asked the Swamijis to practise Dasoha, the Lingayat principle of community service, which Basaveswara had preached, and urged them to teach their flock how to live a virtuous and socially useful life. He cited the great example of Shri Jayadeva Swamy. That great person had refused to help his own mother who was in some difficulty with the Dasoha money. A functionary of the Matha spent the money of the Matha to buy a saree for Swamiji's mother. The Swamiji took the functionary to task and asked him to pay from his pocket the money involved ! Nijalingappa asked, "How many are there now like him ?" He regretted that both the Government and the religious leaders had failed to provide employment for about 40 crore persons in the country. He urged them to explore the ways in which the unemployment problem could be solved. There was no sense in wasting money and time in erecting the statues of Basaveswara. Instead, they should seriously propagate his ideas and ideals, which would be the true statues of Basaveswara ! He urged them to make Basaveswara's teachings universal, not narrowly confined to Veerashaivas only. He recalled that Ambedkar had criticised Lingayats for taking a narrowly sectarian view of Basaveswara's teachings.

One of the public issues agitating the people in the later part of 1986 in Karnataka was the Venkataswami Report on Reservations. Both Vokkaligas and Lingayats, the two dominant communities of Karnataka, were unhappy with it because they were denied the benefit of reservation, and were agitating against it. In this context, P. Ramdev, a former MLA, organised a Seminar on Reservations in Bangalore on 28th September 1986. Kadidal Manjappa presided over it and Nijalingappa inaugurated it. Nijalingappa and Manjappa appealed to their respective communities to stop their agitation against Venkataswami Report because they had already demonstrated adequately their protest against both Havanur and Venktaswami Reports. They argued that the competition for reservations was primarily because of the attraction of government jobs. Nijalingappa pointed out that those whose annual income was above Rs.9,000/- should be denied the benefit of reservations. He said that economic criterion should be the basis of backwardness, but he conceded that caste seemed to have taken permanent roots in the Indian soil, no matter what they did to uproot it ! Hence, it was impossible to overlook caste in measuring backwardness. He urged the agitators to cease their agitation forthwith. Instead they should go to the villages and talukas to collect data about the living conditions of the people. He had himself some eight or ten years ago urged the State and Central Governments to collect this data. Even as recently as three years ago, he had asked the State Government to do so. But nothing came out of his appeals. He emphasised that reservation was a national issue and hence it must be tackled by a national solution. Kadidal Manjappa condemned the policy of increasing government jobs and the neglect of problems of rural poverty. Kadidal Manjappa said that the main attraction of Government jobs was good salary, illegal gratification and very. little work! He was critical of the high salaries paid to government servants.

On 16th May 1987, Nijalingappa was in Hubli to take part in the Centenary of the Lingayat Education Society and the celebration of Hurakadli Ajja's 88th Birth Anniversary. On this occasion, he praised the Society for the good work it was doing in the field of education. He compared the Society to the river Ganga, flowing endlessly and without pollution. On 17th October 1987, he was in Dharwad as the Chief Guest at the Conference of representatives of Khadi Organizations in Karnataka. Here he made a speech which underlines his commitment to a Gandhian economic vision. It also demonstrates Nijalingappa's skill as a communicator who could galvanise his listeners into an actively receptive mood ! He asked the audience, "Is there a Harijan among you ? If there is, stand up." There was a murmur but none stood up. He continued, "May be there is no Harijan here. I shall assume myself to be a Harijan and address you ! You too become for the time being Harijans and listen to me !" He said there were twelve crore Harijans in the country. In the past, they eked out their liveli-hood as tanners, cobblers. They used to skin dead cattle in the villages and use it as raw material. But now that skin was going to Bata and Flex factories in far-away cities, exuding stench ! From there, they returned in the form of chappals and shoes. In this process, only a handful of workers were involved. This development had deprived Harijans of their traditional source of liveli-hood in the rural areas. Today, everybody was after government jobs. But government jobs could be offered only at the rate of 15 for every thousand population at the most. Out of the 15, two or three would be available for the Harijans. But this truth was suppressed by the Government because it wanted to catch the Harijan votes with the temptation of reservations. What did the reservations do for crores of Harijans who could not get government jobs ? He urged that there should be a new reservation policy, reservation of work in select fields,

giving self-employment to the people. This would give jobs to many people, not merely Harijans. If tanning and shoe-making were reserved for the people, not only Harijans, it would provide them with income to live. Let Lingayats, Brahmins and others also do this kind of work. Referring to the political system in the country, he said that a poor man who managed to become a legislator and then a minister became co-opted by the establishment and was alienated from the other poor. Once he became a minister, a poor man enjoyed comforts for the next five years but his problem was the future after five years. To provide for it, he became corrupt and amassed wealth illegally in order to continue to live in the same style even after quitting office. Referring to the comment of some that Khadi was a shoddy cloth, that is "*Kalape*" cloth, Nijalingappa said that he was wearing it since 1920s. He could testify that it was more durable than mill cloth. He said he still had with him in a usable shape clothes made some 18 years ago ! He said, "Look at me ! I am wearing clean Khadi now." Then he smiled and the whole audience burst into laughter ! On 1st November 1987, he was in Gulbarga to participate in the Kannada Sahitya Sammelana. He was honoured on the occasion as one of those who as office-holders in Government had promoted Kannada language. He took this opportunity to offer his own unique definition of what constituted genuine literature. He characterised as genuine literature that writing which opened sleeping eyes, made the person with opened eyes to sit up, made the sitting person to stand up, and finally made the standing person to jig with joy ! In spite of its apparent naivete, this definition underscores the transformative function of literature.

Easily the most significant act of Nijalingappa in 1987 was the Atulya Ghosh Memorial Lecture which he delivered in Calcutta to honour the memory of his friend and colleague

Atulya Ghosh. It was the first Memorial Lecture. After referring to Ghosh's qualities of head and heart, Nijalingappa went on to offer a serious, penetrating and comprehensive analysis of the imbalances in Indian economy and ways of remedying them. After a brief reference to Ghosh's love of children and flowers, he launched his economic analysis, not as a professional economist but as one who, in his fifty years of political life, had gained some practical insight into the problem. He argued that the economic development of the last forty years had aggravated the disparities between rural India and urban India. Before going into his main theme, he referred to Gandhiji's warning that unless the rich voluntarily shared their riches with the poor, they would be forced to do so through "a bloody and violent revolution". Thus the disparities referred to were not just between rural and urban India but between the classes as well. Here he committed himself to the Gandhian principles of non-violence and decentralisation of power and resources. Then he invoked the name of Sardar Patel, and bracketed him with Gandhiji, as a leader who knew the problems of rural India, the real India. Obviously, without naming Nehru, he bluntly blamed the economic development model adopted after Independence for the economic, social and moral decline of the country. Then he referred to the Indian Constitution, with specific focus on two of its basic components - Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy. The first component gave the Indian masses negative freedom while the second component aimed to give them positive freedom. The tragedy of Independent India was the total neglect of the second component. The developmental model of unnamed Nehru was based on "the glamour of the industrial West..." It encouraged capital intensive heavy industries, and it involved inputs borrowed from the West as well - capital, machinery and technology. This led to huge foreign debt commitments. Then

there was pseudo-socialism involving licence raj and bureaucratic control. This was a corrupt class, revelling in crassest venality. The ten percent in larger cities received the benefits of this developmental model. In the rural areas, the seventyfive percent population was denied the most basic amenities. For instance, they were denied the advantage of literacy, which was constitutionally guaranteed by the Directive Principles. Arguing that the foundation of Indian economic life was agriculture, he suggested that it needed to be developed systematically on a scientific basis in the same way as industry. He said "... It is my firm opinion that it (agriculture) is an industry and has to be properly and scientifically organised ... " He also referred to the neglect of irrigation projects. Based on his own calculations, he pointed out that investment in agriculture yielded 25 % return. He asked, "...Is there any industry undertaken either in Public sector or the Private Sector which can give this return on capital ?..." Then he went on to discuss the sanitary and hygienic conditions in rural areas which too, had been badly neglected. He emphasised the significance of Gobar Gas Plants. Even in this matter, India had done worse than China. He urged a drastic re-thinking on our energy problem, and went back to bio-technology. A massive bio-gas energy programme based on costs shared between the Centre and States was the most practical solution to our energy problem. More scientific research needed to be made into bio-gas technology. He argued that rural unemployment could be solved only through Gandhian programmes centered on cottage industries. His indictment of the Nehru model was that "... The unthinking Government and Rich Capitalists colluded and established more and more of these industries ..." In a devastating comment, he called this policy an extension of colonial economic policy. The developmental model adopted after 1947 was not based on a true understanding of Indian realities, especially it failed to take

into account the fact that, "... This is not one of those countries where population is small, labour few ..." In short, he advocated a radical restructuring of priorities based on a shift from a capital intensive economy to a labour intensive economy. The problem of poverty was linked to the problem of unemployment. Turning his attention to the issue of land distribution in the rural areas, Nijalingappa suggested that we should "divide the whole land into economic and manageable holdings ..." For irrigated areas, this worked out at about six acres and for dry-farming between 20 to 30 acres. No person having any other avenue of income should be allowed to control these divided plots. Nijalingappa called this a scheme of Socialization. After rural India, he made a brief reference to urban India and its ugly and bloated cities, where human life was virtually impossible. He suggested a policy of indirect de-populating of the unmanageable mega cities by shifting factories away from them. He argued for a policy of restricting cloth production and edible oil production to decentralised local units of production, with no heavy machinery. The Indian villages must be made self-reliant for their essential needs. Then he went on to suggest how corruption and black money could be checked. He wanted a rigorous audit of the earnings, real earnings, of all high office-holders, from the Prime Minister down. He was merciless on the utter lack of service-mindedness among the bureaucracy. This needed to be toned up, if need be, with drastic measures. He regretted the uneconomic nature of many public sector undertakings and suggested a serious auditing of the situation in this domain. Then, he suggested that the size of the bureaucracy should be drastically reduced to avoid wastage. He was also not very happy with the costly machinery of the Planning Commission, which was extra-constitutional and perhaps functionless ! In his conclusion, he listed ten remedies, and they are worth quoting :-

Do not encourage capital intensive undertakings. Have a policy of labour intensive ones.

Within 10 years bring under irrigation 10 to 12 crore acres of more area positively. It is possible if wasteful expenditure of time and money is avoided.

Where interest of centralised production and decentralised production clash, encourage by all means the latter.

Gandhiji's Constructive Programmes should be given the fullest encouragement so that villages are not only sufficient but self-sustaining.

Have reservations provided for cottage industries as pointed above, wherever possible.

Have Bio-gas energy and human energy due to unemployment and also bullock energy fully utilised. Bullock carts alone should cart agricultural produce etc., from villages to the nearest markets and not trucks. Petrol is saved.

Find out dishonest accumulations of all government employees and make laws to confiscate them. Similarly of others pointed above.

Have different punishment for erring Government servants. Wherever possible adopt the policy of "Hire and Fire." Accountability and punishment should be enforced.

Prevent concentration of wealth and power.

Remember Gandhiji and follow him.

"Satyam Shivam Sundaram"

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of this document as a realistic analysis of India's multiple woes and as a charter of remedies for them. One may not agree with it but one must take it seriously, and try to see to what extent it is a feasible programme given our current crisis-ridden situation. Some of the suggestions such as those relating to the reform of the bureaucracy, while eminently sensible and desirable, may not be practicable. But the importance of this document lies not in its details but in its overall thrust, its central critique of the Nehruvian developmental model. Its commitment to the Gandhian ideals is total, and may be time has now come to take the Mahatma back into our lives as a nation on the brink of a moral collapse.

On 22nd May 1988, Nijalingappa presided over a Conference of freedom-fighters in Bangalore. On that occasion he lamented that, though we became free forty years ago, social and economic inequalities persisted. The responsibility for this must be owned by the ruling class, especially those in office and power. Politicians in power were corrupt because they wanted to amass wealth. This led to a concentration of wealth in a few hands. Rural poverty was the result of neglect by both the States and the Centre. The Planning Commission had no real knowledge of the plight of rural poor and the peasantry. He appealed to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to lay policy emphasis on schemes meant to meet the minimum needs of the poor and eventually liquidate poverty. Later on 29th May 1988, he inaugurated a Conference of pro-Kannada Organizations. He urged the Government to implement the Mahājan and Mahishi Reports as they safeguarded the interests of Kannadigas. At this Conference organised by the Sahiti Kalavidar Balaga, he asserted that Karnataka was second to no other state in its progress. But he urged that its culture should

be developed as an expression of Indian national culture. He conceded that the Mahajan Report contained many injustices to Kannadigas but they had to accept it in order to retain Belgaum. He was unhappy that Kannadigas did not come forward to start industries in the State and thus allowed outsiders to come into the State. On 28th July 1988, Nijalingappa hoisted the national flag in famous Shivapur to mark the 50th anniversary of the great Shivapur Satyagraha, which also coincided with the 41st anniversary of India's Independence. Some who had participated in the 1938 Satyagraha like Tagadur Ramachandra Rao, M.S. Jois and Dr. Partha Narayana Pandit were present on the occasion. Apart from these frequent public appearances which gave him a chance to exhort the people, Nijalingappa also used them to express his changing ideas.

Undoubtedly 1988 was the darkest year for the ageing leader. It was on 10th October 1988 that his life-partner of 62 years and the backbone of his life-world, Murigemma passed away in a private nursing home in Bangalore. According to one of her sons, she seemed to be looking forward to death because she had been suffering from physical disabilities like blindness and arthritis and that she did not want to give trouble to others, and like a good Hindu wife she was anxious to pass away as a sumangali. The death came ten days after a massive heart attack. This was the second occasion on which Nijalingappa sobbed literally like a child, though he was seldom given to such emotional outbursts. The first occasion was when he lost his mother. Murigemma was a remarkable lady but not untypical of orthodox Indian culture. She was educated only upto Kannada V form. She could read Kannada but could write it only with difficulty. She was simplicity itself, and an embodiment of patience. To her, her husband and family were

her only preoccupation. She never took any interest in politics and never showed that she was the wife of a Chief Minister. But without her positive support, Nijalingappa's political life could have been problematic. She took care of the family and thus allowed him to do his politics without domestic entanglements. She was an orthodox lady who believed in God and her Dharma. Her strength was her deeply crystallised and stable character, which acted as a buffer against all life's adversities. She was buried near Chitradurga on 11th October 1988. It is impossible to estimate the depth and extent of this loss to Nijalingappa, and perhaps it is best for a biographer to keep away from ploughing into intensely private areas of his life.

A person endowed with stoic forbearance, Nijalingappa did not allow this great personal tragedy to affect his mission as a propagator of politics of conscience and consciousness. He kept himself busy, with contacts with the public. On 2nd October 1989, he spoke during the Gandhi Jayanti organised by Hubli Lion's Club. He regretted that we had forgotten Gandhiji who got us our freedom through the means of truth and non-violence by conquering the enemy without arms. Nijalingappa described Gandhiji as the foremost leader among those who were selfless and dedicated to the service of the people. He urged his audience to practise Gandhian principles even if to a small extent. He referred to the utterance of Lord Krishna that he would arrive on earth to save Dharma when it was in danger of being eclipsed. Nijalingappa interpreted this to mean not God, but man, appeared in some form to save Dharma. Such were men like Rama, Buddha, Jesus and Basava. They were all deeply concerned about universal human welfare. After a brief discussion of their messages, he rated Gandhiji as the highest among them. On 22nd October 1989, talking to pressmen in Bangalore, Nijalingappa said that he had no respect for any

political party. He condemned all political leaders, with the exception of Jyoti Basu and the BJP leaders. But this was a purely personal admiration and had nothing to do with the ideologies of these leaders. It is well known that he was opposed to BJP's communalism and the Indian Communist version of Marxism. He said political leaders as a class were hopelessly corrupt. He pointed out that all Chief Ministers and even the Prime Minister were facing charges of corruption. He asked, "Who is pure ?" The BJP leaders were not tainted with corruption but it was a party without any future. This was because it was indirectly controlled by the RSS (Rashtriya Swayam-Sevak Sangha). He referred to the imminent elections and urged the people to vote. He advised them to vote for the most deserving candidates irrespective of party considerations. Referring to the Babri Masjid and Ramajanmabhoomi controversy, he said it was a regrettable development. He warned that no ideas that tended to disrupt the unity of the country should be encouraged. The real solution to the inter-faith conflict was to provide scope for the followers of all religions to worship in their own way. He referred to the remarkable case of Bababudan Hills in Karnataka where Hindus and Muslims worshipped in one and the same place. He wanted this practice to be extended. He dubbed the Jawahar Rozgar Scheme and Nehru Rozgar Scheme as election stunts. Moreover, Nehru's name was most inappropriate for schemes meant to provide rural employment. This was because Nehru had no faith in programmes of rural employment ! It was Gandhiji who was committed to this programme, and he had written to the Prime Minister to change the name from Nehru to Gandhiji. In fact, later Ramakrishna Hegde, Vice-Chairman of the Planning Commission, hinted that the schemes might be re-christened. Nijalingappa's contempt for political parties stemmed from his perception that they led to political fragmentation, political

uncertainty, and instability. The 1989 elections to the Lok Sabha demonstrated this beyond doubt. No party was able to obtain a clear majority, the Congress (I) winning the largest number of seats (192 out of a total of 525). The Janata Dal was the next best with 141 seats. The BJP was third with 88 seats.

One of the significant sources of inspiration for Nijalingappa as a youth, was Hardekar Manjappa. A remarkable leader who exercised profound impact on Lingayat politics in Karnataka, and was perhaps instrumental in converting that community to Gandhism and Congress. Manjappa possessed a first-rate intellect and is one of the most original political thinkers to write in Kannada. He was popularly known as Karnataka Gandhi, and he died before India attained Independence. In spite of his Gandhian commitments, he was not an uncritical follower of Gandhiji. His writings in masterly Kannada prose were collected and published under the editorship of late G.S. Halappa, Professor of Political Science, Karnatak University. This biographer had the privilege of being associated with that scheme as a junior colleague of Halappa at the University. The Centenary of Manjappa was celebrated in 1990. As part of the celebrations, the Kannada and Culture Department of Karnataka Government published a memorial volume, "Karnataka Gandhi : Hardekar Manjappa" to which, incidentally, this biographer contributed an essay on Manjappa's political ideas. Nijalingappa released this volume at a function in Dharwad on 21st April 1990. Nijalingappa said that Manjappa was influenced by Basaveswara and Gandhiji, a description which might as well apply to Nijalingappa himself. Though he was influenced by them, Manjappa never gave up his right to think independently. For instance, Manjappa rejected Gandhiji's belief in the Varnashrama Scheme. Nijalingappa regretted that even today caste dominated our life. He was sorry

that countless injustices were perpetrated to preserve this system. Referring to Sanskrit language, he said that he admired it as a great language. He regretted that its knowledge was denied to the common folk. If Sanskrit had been accessible to common people, this country's history would have been radically different.

One of the activities in which he was engaged in this new phase was to encourage social service organizations and to use his influence to get them Government support at the State and Central levels. For instance, early in 1990, he took interest in a scheme to establish a Rural Institute for Training in Rural Reconstruction and Management proposed by the Banavasi Valaya Abhyudaya Samiti, Banavasi, in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka. On 27th February 1990, he addressed a letter to the then Prime Minister, V.P. Singh, in this connection, requesting him to extend active support of the Government to the scheme. In July 1992, addressing a mammoth rally of farmers organised by Karnataka Vedike, he took up the cause of Karnataka on the Cauvery issue. He told the Prime Minister, P.V.Narasimha Rao, that it was wrong to have constituted the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal. He was critical that the three-man body had been set up without any guidelines and norms for river water sharing. He urged the Prime Minister to assemble concerned experts, collect all the relevant data and formulate first proper guidelines. He accused the Centre of heaping injustices on Karnataka. He warned that the people would not take this lying down. He was also sorry that the 10 irrigation projects initiated by him as Chief Minister had not been completed. Now the State had only one major irrigation project, that of Krishnaraja Sagara. The Centre had neglected the interest of the farmers, and had also failed to implement many provisions of Directive Principles. Literacy and education had not reached the farmers. Corruption was rampant and many had amassed

wealth illegally. He was sorry that even judiciary had deteriorated. He said he had concrete evidence about the corrupt ways of the members of the Tribunal. He asked Narasimha Rao to take the concerned video cassette from Deve Gowda. He accused the Tamil Nadu Government of using Cauvery water illegally. He urged the Prime Minister to enquire into the matter. He declared, "We will give you Mr.Balekundri. You send your experts. We will show you what is happening. Forgetting narrow parochial interests, let us thrash out the matter in the light of truth. Why waste time on judges who fall for costly silverware and good sarees for their wives ?" On 27th July 1992, Karnataka Vikasa Vedike organised a rally of some 50,000 farmers from Cauvery basin districts of Karnataka in Mysore to protest against the Tribunal. The Vedike convenor was H.D.Deve Gowda, then a Samajawadi MP. Nijalingappa who participated in the rally administered a pledge to the rally that the people of Karnataka would start a peaceful agitation to protect the interests of the State. Nijalingappa exhorted the people to fight against the step-motherly treatment meted out to the State over the Cauvery and Krishna issues. He urged the Prime Minister to come up with a national policy on river water sharing within three months.

On 30th March 1993, Nijalingappa told the press in Bangalore that there was a need for a third force, which alone could save the country. He said, "On the one hand, we have a party (Congress - I) guided by Nehru's outdated philosophy while on the other there is a party (BJP) which totally stands for Hinduism." He considered it most dangerous if the BJP was allowed to come to power. He asked, "Should fundamentalists, casteists and communalists be allowed to rule the country? I do not know what Hinduism means but according to BJP, Hinduism is anti-Muslim." The Congress had been reduced to

the status of a party of opportunists and unscrupulous power-seekers. Narasimha Rao's Government was concerned not to develop the country but merely to survive. He was breaking his long silence in his hour-long press conference. He held Nehru responsible for all the ills of the country. He ridiculed the Planning Commission as an ignorant body and dismissed Manmohan Singh as a servant of the banks. He was visibly upset by a press report that Nehru had called Gandhiji an "awful old hypocrite": He said this statement made Nehru self-condemned. Angrily, he said, "Gandhiji is a person born once in thousand years... Manmohan Singh - what a nice name - is a good man, but he is a servant of the banks. Does he know India? Does he know the harm his policies have caused to the country?" He condemned the Planning Commission as an evil, an extra-constitutional body, and "an imitation of communist Russia." Its members were "only loyal to books written by outsiders". He was critical of the Commission's policy of recommending import of machinery, capital and expertise without any understanding of our own economy, production and exports. He was appreciative of Veerappa Moily's Government. He said, "...I do not know Moily well - I have seen him once or twice - but so far he has done better job". He was critical of earlier Chief Minister and his Chief Secretary. He said "They had occasion to wake up a High Court Judge and obtain anticipatory bail at midnight in the Classic computer case. This speaks volumes". He demanded that the corrupt and bribe-takers should be handed over to the CBI, and the assets of all persons in power should be investigated into. Referring to the B reports, he turned angry and said, "This is a damn dirty thing that has happened here. In spite of my non-violence, I feel like manhandling all these people". Referring to the killings of three Harijans in Badanwal village, by Lingayats over a temple dispute, Nijalingappa, himself a Lingayat, called it an "unbearable crime". He wanted the post

of temple priests abolished and the temples made accessible to all castes. He asked, in a protestant spirit, "Why should a priest or the head of a religious matha stand between the devotees and God?" In this he was echoing the radical religiosity of Basaveswara. He urged the common man to root out the mounting corruption in the country. On 6th June 1993, many friends and admirers of Nijalingappa decided to launch a Trust called Shri S.Nijalingappa National Foundation. It was registered on 17th June 1993, with the aim of working as a voluntary association promoting nation-building. Its President is appropriately Shri A.R.Badarinarayan, a former Minister of Karnataka and a close associate of Nijalingappa. Earlier, Nijalingappa sent a message to it through G.B.Mahalinga Shetty in May 1993. In it, he re-iterated his conviction that Gandhism was the only solution to the many problems the country faced. He emphasised the need for decentralisation of power and resources, local self-reliance, and the ideal of equality. He also held a vision of human welfare, citing the concept of "Vishwa Manawa", proposed by the State poet laureate, Kuvempu. A special feature on Nijalingappa by the journalist, Gautham Machaiah, carried the title "The August of a Patriarch". The author of the despatch pointed out that the autumn of Nijalilingappa was "haunted by the decay of ideals he had built on". This is an accurate description because Nijalingappa was worried by the overall decline of the country in every field, especially the erosion of public morals. He was disgusted with the escalating corruption in public life and the collapse of institutional morality. As usual, he attributed these developments to the fact that Gandhian ideals were forgotten soon after the attainment of Independence.

On 16 May 1994, Nijalingappa addressed a letter in Kannada to the then Chief Minister of Karnataka, Veerappa Moily, urging him to make Hardekar Manjappa's house in

Banavasi into a memorial building. In this letter, Nijalingappa said that he as a boy of ten or twelve, came under the spell of Manjappa, who was then editing his famous journal, Dhanurdhari, in Davanagere. He said that he had personal rapport with the great leader, and he had learnt a great deal from this direct contact. Earlier, on 10 February 1994, he wrote a letter to Chief Minister, Veerappa Moily, to take personal interest in the establishment of the Rural Institute, proposed by the Banavasi Valaya Abhyudaya Samiti, in Banavasi, and see that it was set up without further delay. Given the fact that Nijalingappa had virtually written off the political parties, it is natural to ask what alternative he had in mind. According to a source close to Nijalingappa, it appears that he has in his mind the ideal of a non-confrontational, consensus form of politics. Nijalingappa is believed to have some notion of a Consensus Association of eminent persons in public life. This idea is similar to the one mooted by a Committee for National Consensus, in which were involved T.N. Sheshan and Manmohan Singh. But to date, Nijalingappa has not sufficiently elaborated this idea. This idea has parallels with the notion of a National Government, ultimately going back to JP's partyless democracy. However, this theme is not yet on the serious political agenda, and is still to find active political articulation. But it is worth exploring.

One of the recurring and dominant themes in Nijalingappa's public and political life is agricultural development through irrigation projects. No wonder that towards the end of May, 1995, he advised the then Chief Minister of Karnataka, H.D. Deve Gowda, to complete irrigation projects and provide uninterrupted power to farmers. He also advised him to make the farmers pay for the service. Nijalingappa was speaking to Gowda when the latter called on him in Bangalore. Nijalingappa told Gowda, to complete the irrigation projects on hand.

Gowda's reply was, "In your presence, I take a vow to try to complete all irrigation projects and give top priority to electricity generation."

Perhaps as our narration will soon come to an end, it is the right time to remember that there was a private Nijalingappa behind the historical and public Nijalingappa. Our focus has been exclusively on the public figure at the cost of the private person. But then this is an inevitable loss in a biography of a public and historical person. We can only resort to marginal manoeuvers to provide a rough picture of this private Nijalingappa. Fortunately, Nijalingappa has himself provided us with an account of how he spends his day in a feature published in the Kannada Weekly, Karmaveera, of 19th March 1995. The picture that emerges out of this self-portrait is that of a moderate, modest and transparent personality. He says that the secret of his longevity was that he was a very moderate eater, that he did not drink or smoke, took occasional physical exercise, and that he slept soundly. It is a disciplined life with every act regulated and co-ordinated with others. He gets up at 7 AM, finishes his tòilet and bath, and then reads the newspapers and journals. He attends to his correspondence, which seems to be fairly demanding. In the noon he listens to the music broadcast over the radio. A lot of his time is spent in counselling and consoling the stream of villagers who seek his advice. Then he takes a noon nap for an hour or hour and a half. But these days, the calamities and tragedies that constitute our public and political life worry him so much that he suddenly wakes up in the midnight. Only one of his eyes is functional. The other eye is all right, but he has problems in seeing distant objects. His hearing is good, but that was in 1995. But today, he has to strain to catch our words. He wants the Gandhian ideals to be realised. He is not worried about

death because it is a twin of birth, and hence unavoidable. He has no belief in previous or after life or re-birth. He is happy he can serve the people while alive and then die in peace ! He is an agnostic because he has not resolved the question of the existence of God either way. It is best to enjoy life as a gift and leave it cheerfully, when the time comes. After death, the body merges into the elements, and that is that. His modesty is such that he merely happily accepted the honorary degree of Nadoja awarded to him by the Kannada University in Hampi, along with Gangubai Hanagal and Kuvempu.

As for his immediate family, the following details were supplied to this biographer by one of his sons. The eldest of his children is Parvathamma, now 68 years old. She studied upto Matriculation and was married to G.B. Mahalingashetty of Hubli, a tea merchant and contractor. She lost her husband a year back. She has four sons and two daughters. She is a co-author, with her brothers, Rajashekhar and Umakant of a Kannada Vargikruta Padakosha. The second, N. Umakant, is now 66, has an M.Sc., degree in Physics and he retired as Professor of Physics from Karnatak University, Dharwad. He remains unmarried. The third, N. Rajasekhar, now 65 studied upto PUC, and took to farming. He now lives a retired life and is also unmarried. He lives with Nijalingappa in Chitradurga and looks after his father. He accomplished the formidable task of rendering Kuvempu's Ramayanadarshanam into Kannada prose, and he is also the author of Vargikruta Padakosha in Hindi. He has also translated with Umakant Maeterlinck's play, Blue Birds, into Kannada. The fourth, Anasuya, is 63. She studied upto Matriculation, and was married to Dr. G. Chandrasekharappa of Bangalore. She lost her husband a few months back. She has two sons and one daughter. The fifth, Gowramma, is now 62. She studied upto B.Sc., and got married

to S.V. Parameshwar, son of Sahukar Veerabhadrappa who had supported Nijalingappa during his student days. Parameshwar was an officer with an Insurance Company and he passed away fifteen years ago. They have two sons and one daughter. The sixth, Girijamma, is 58. She studied upto Matriculation, and she married M.V. Rajasekharan of Maralawadi living at Bangalore. Rajasekharan is the Chairman of the International Institute for Development based in Manila. They have two sons and two daughters. The seventh, Pratibha, is 54. She studied upto M.Sc., degree, and is married to S.B. Muddappa, an IAS Officer. [Sri Muddappa retired recently from the post of Chief Secretary to Government of Karnataka]. Pratibha is a lecturer in a college in Bangalore. They have one son and one daughter. Pratibha is the author of a text-book on Botany. The eighth, Kiranshankar, holds a Master's degree in Architecture from Yale University. He is 52, and is currently the Chief Architect to Government of Karnataka. He is the only son married and has a son and a daughter. The youngest, Purnima is 50, and she studied upto B.Sc. She is married to Dr. Jaya Islur, and they have settled in Canada. They have two sons. Thus, it is a full family, supplying Nijalingappa with plenty of grand-children to play with. Nijalingappa is known to have rapport with children and he enjoys their company. He is blessed with a large crowd of grand-children and great-grand-children. Whenever Nijalingappa goes on tour Sri S.G. Manjunath, Son of late S. Gurunath, cousin of Nijalingappa, takes care of him.

On 3rd November 1995, Chief Minister of Karnataka, Deve Gowda, appealed to industrialists and farmers to pay according to their capacity and co-operate with the Government in its efforts to revise the power tariff. He was addressing a gathering of farmers at a function in front of the Vidhana Soudha in Bangalore. The function was got up to present Krishi

Awards to farmers who had achieved higher yields in food-grains and commercial crops during the year 1994-95. He told the gathering that the accumulated loss of the KEB ran to some 730 crore rupees. He said that no final decision had been taken on the quantum of the hike in tariff. He assured them that industrialists would be asked to bear more, and the farmers to pay the minimum. Nijalingappa participated in the function. In his address, he accused the Centre of having neglected irrigation projects. Many projects started prior to Independence had yet to be completed. The reason for this was the failure of Central Government to implement the Directive Principles of State Policy. He claimed that, if he had not left his Chief-Ministership, he would have got the Upper Krishna project completed fifteen years ago. He was proud that he had got the Sharavati Project, the biggest in Asia at the time, completed in just six years when he was Chief Minister. A unique tribute to Nijalingappa was contemplated towards the end of 1995 by the Janata Government in Karnataka, which was to establish a Nijalinga Nagar Nijalingapura, a model town-ship on the lines of Chandigarh. On 30 December 1995. Former Chief Justice of Supreme Court, E.S.Venkataramaiah, visited Hadagali in Bellary district, and selected an area of 1600 acres near Koliragatti, six kms from Hadagali town. Karnataka's Rural Development Minister, M.P. Prakash, accompanied Venkataramaiah during the inspection of the land. Later, Venkataramaiah told the press that the new settlement could serve as a second Capital and relieve the congestion in Bangalore. The development of the town-ship would be entrusted to a development authority under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner of Bellary. Minister Prakash said that a residential school and an agricultural research station would be set up on the site. The Minister said that the Government had already sanctioned one crore rupees for a scheme of drinking water to surrounding

villages. Bellary was chosen presumably because originally Nijalingappa hailed from a village in the Harapanahalli taluka of the district and also because it was at the geographical centre of the state.

The politician in Nijalingappa was naturally roused by the elections which were to take place in early 1996. But this was not from the perspective of any political party since he had severed his connections with all existing parties. It was prompted by the non-partisan interest of a concerned citizen with a conscience and a consciousness of the political reality. Therefore, it is not surprising that he took the trouble to issue a public appeal to all citizens and leaders of political parties, explaining the significance of the occasion and what they ought to do in this connection. He first gave a brief analysis of the political situation. He referred to the acute differences between parties and within parties. Then he pointed out that politics had been invaded by criminal elements of all sorts. He did not spare the working class for indulging in unwarranted strikes. Then there was corruption rampant in every area of public life. In short, the interest of the common man, especially in the rural areas, was wholly neglected. In the countryside, poverty and unemployment were on the increase. He blamed this on the neglect of agriculture, the very backbone of our economy. Then he deplored the non-implementation of the constitutional provisions under Directive Principles which, according to the Supreme Court, have a moral binding, though technically non-justiciable. The miserable plight of the rural areas was the direct result of neglecting these constitutional provisions. Then he referred to the various scams, and listed the crimes of the bureaucracy. Not only all Governments but also political parties and their leaders have become alienated from the masses. He prophesied that this fragmentation and deterioration of political

life would be reflected in the fact that no party would attain a clear majority in the coming elections - a prophecy which proved true. So what was the way out ? He rejected the communist solution, and also the fundamentalist communalism of the BJP. Only that party which stood for secularism and democracy should be encouraged. But where was such a party ? Certainly no existing party qualified for this role. Here, Nijalingappa began to articulate a theme which continues to occupy his attention in the 1990s. He said, ".. Under these circumstances, I feel the only remedy lies in reviving the Old Congress which fought for freedom and which ruled the country for about 20 years ..." This revived Congress would follow the Gandhian path. Though Nijalingappa did not make this explicit, the implication was that the Nehruvian model had to be jettisoned. This should be an omnibus party, gathering into its bosom all secular and democratic parties and groups. This new-old Congress should fight the elections and take the country along the path chalked out by the old Congress. He examined the suggestion that in each constituency people should set up a deserving and non-party candidate. He regarded this idea as not yet feasible. Hence, he pinned his hope to the revival of old Congress. However attractive this idea might be outwardly, it ran into serious problems when put into practice. There were formidable logistic, organizational and ideological problems involved. In his recent discussion with Nijalingappa, when this biographer pointed this out to him, the old leader conceded that there were formidable obstacles. But he said it was worth trying in a situation where nothing else seemed to work. He was personally optimistic and also aware that this would take time. In fact, this idea had already been mooted during the Janata days by his friend S.K.Patil. Addressing the pressmen on 24th January 1996 in Bangalore, he reverted to this theme. He urged the Congress leaders of the pre-1969 Congress party to unite

under one banner and fight the elections. He suggested that P.V. Narasimha Rao, Ramakrishna Hegde and Bommai should take the initiative in this direction. He said he would offer his unstinting service in this cause. But he would not himself take the first step in that direction. Chief Minister Deve Gowda who met Nijalingappa was said to have agreed with this suggestion. Nijalingappa had some difficulty in dealing with the BJP. This was because though he opposed its ideology, it had leaders who had proved to be thoroughly honest. He was appreciative of L.K. Advani's decision to resign from the Lok Sabha after being charge-sheeted by the CBI in the Hawala case. He wanted Narasimha Rao also to resign on the same lines. He did not think much of the idea of handing over the Congress to Sonia Gandhi's leadership. He said that she was an ordinary lady and there was nothing great about her. Nijalingappa's suggestion was found problematic by the correspondents, given the context of the Hawala scam in which many old Congressmen were involved. He said there were also many old Congressmen who had no connection with the scam. He made the extraordinary and perhaps utopian suggestion, " ... I invite even leaders from BJP to join the Old Congress banner ... !" He was unhappy with the growing corruption, criminalisation of politics, rising communalism, glaring inequalities and other evils. He was opposed to indiscriminate reservations as harmful to the unity of the nation.

On 20th June 1996, Nijalingappa gave an interview to the correspondent of Indian Express, in which he demonstrated his keen awareness of and interest in current political developments in the country. He feared that the "personal and political enmity" between Deve Gowda and Ramakrishna Hegde might have a serious impact on the Governments at the Centre and the State. He asserted with the bluntness so characteristic of him that there

was "no principle or ideology" at stake in the drastic act of expelling Hegde from the party. The only factor involved was personal enmity between the two leaders from Karnataka. He was especially critical of the violation of procedural norms in expelling Hegde. Hegde was not served any show-cause notice prior to his expulsion. He was no less critical of Hegde for issuing public statements relating to party affairs. He said internal conflicts in the Janata Dal would help the Congress and the BJP. It might lead eventually to the collapse of the UF Government at the Centre. He advised Gowda and Hegde to patch up their differences in the interest of the party. He said that the Chief Minister of Karnataka, J.H.Patel, had discussed the matter with him, before leaving for Delhi, over the telephone. Patel had agreed to pass on to Gowda Nijalingappa's views in the matter. He also said that Hegde had called on him and had a one-hour discussion with him. Hegde gave his old mentor a detailed account of what happened between him and Gowda. Nijalingappa had the impression that Hegde was willing to reconsider the situation. Nijalingappa hoped that Gowda would also heed his advice. Nijalingappa disclosed that he had even advised Hegde to drop the proposed convention of his supporters. Hegde, however, had told him that this was beyond his control since his supporters insisted on it. Besides Hegde, other important persons who met Nijalingappa included Ministers M.P. Prakash, R.V. Deshpande and P.G.R. Scindia, and the working president of the State Janata Dal A. Lakshmisagar. This incident underscores both the lively interest Nijalingappa took in current politics and the substantial personal-moral power he still exercised over active politicians. In the issue of Indian Express of 9th June 1996, Nijalingappa spoke at length in the Guest Chair Column. In it, he welcomed Gowda's elevation to Prime Ministership both because he hailed from Karnataka and also because he was "a man interested in agriculture". However, he feared that the Congress would not

let Gowda run his full term. Referring to 1969 split, he once again accused Indira Gandhi of being unprincipled. She stood for untruth while he stood for truth. Recounting briefly his own political history, he said that after the split he was with the Old Congress till it merged with the Janata party. Now he found that no party was good enough to attract his allegiance. He thought that Gowda's entry into national politics signalled a crucial role for Karnataka in national politics. He called Karnataka as an anti-establishment State, and Gandhiji called it "my province". Karnataka had successfully carried out the Gandhian struggle before Independence. But after 1947, Karnataka became involved in "our own small games". Uttar Pradesh dominated with most PMs hailing from it. He said he had opposed the Avadi resolution involving the meaningless notion of socialistic pattern of society. He accused all parties of not having a clear-cut economic programme. He referred again to the imbalance between urban and rural India, with the former having an upper hand. He was optimistic that things might improve. He asserted that they must improve. He regretted that we imitated the West and abandoned the Gandhian ideals. While he had regard for Nehru as a good man, he was critical of his policies which neglected agriculture and rural India. Nehru gave up Gandhism and imitated Russia. Nijalingappa said Communism had no value even in the West. He criticised the left parties for lack of clear programmes. He lambasted the BJP for its communalism. He said that the common man today was aware of his rights but was not enlightened enough to use them properly. As always, he demanded that the Directive Principles should be fully implemented as they provided a sound foundation for our national life. Nijalingappa spoke to Sharita Rai who took down the notes and presumably, with his approval, published them. Continuing his mission of reviving the Old Congress, Nijalingappa made an appeal to Narasimha Rao to

resign from his office as Congress President and urged all those who had left the Congress in 1969 to return to its fold and revive it. He was keen on forging unity among the various factions of the Congress. Not merely content with making an appeal, he put his idea into concrete shape by calling a convention in Bangalore in August 1996 to discuss how this unity could be achieved and how they could all come under the banner of Indian National Congress as a secular and democratic party to counter the BJP. An old idea with him, Nijalingappa now took advantage of the fact that Rao was politically vulnerable in the context of High Court's rejection of his appeal in July 1996, and initiated the concrete move. Nijalingappa wanted Rao to step down because that was the pre-condition demanded by former Congressmen to return to the old party. He held that Rao was morally required to resign from his office. He was visiting the Capital in this connection and he also met Prime Minister Deve Gowda. He recalled how he had stepped down from his Chief-Ministership in 1957 because of an indirect complaint sent by Nehru through an emissary of his Government charging that Nijalingappa's Government was not good. Nijalingappa told the press, "I immediately called for a sheet of paper, wrote out my resignation, called for my own car and drove away." As for the issue of who should lead the new revived Congress, he said the Bangalore Convention would decide it. He was against concentration of power and did not favour one person holding both Prime-Ministership and Congress Presidentship. The Bangalore Convention was called by the recently formed formal body, "United Congress Forum", of which Nijalingappa was the Chairman. Its Vice-chairman, Choudhury Ranvir Singh, like Nijalingappa, was one of the few surviving members of the Constituent Assembly, and he came from Haryana. Syed Ashraf, a former aide of V.P. Singh, also an office-bearer of Congress (I), was the official convenor. The

Forum had invited a large number of Congressmen and former Congressmen to the Convention, including Deve Gowda, Narasimha Rao, R. Venkataraman, C. Subramaniam, Dr. Karan Singh, Chandrasekhar, Sharad Pawar, Arjun Singh, Karunakaran and even Sonia Gandhi ! It is interesting that the invitees included many opponents of Rao inside the Congress. However, to date, nothing concrete seems to have come out of it, though Nijalingappa, a born optimist if ever there was one, is not the kind of person who will give up a cause to which he is committed. Later addressing a press conference, Nijalingappa said that Narasimha Rao should be removed as President of the Congress (I) and gave a call to all former Congressmen to revive the Indian National Congress. He said that many Congressmen were frustrated with the way present Congress (I) had abandoned the ideology of the Old Congress. He said that Indira Gandhi had killed the Congress in 1969, and a time had come to remove the suffix (I) after the word, Congress ! Asked about his views on Gowda Government, he said that it was too early to pass any judgement on it.

It is not well-known that Nijalingappa's admiration and love for Sardar Patel went far beyond lip sympathy. Nijalingappa has often openly regretted that Patel did not become the first Prime Minister of India because he had deep roots in India's rural and agricultural life. Nijalingappa took the initiative in establishing the Sardar Patel Society, of which he is the Chairman. Among other things, the Society planned to set up a Sardar Patel Memorial Museum and Library on the lines of Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, publish Patel's writings and speeches, and institute a special lecture series in his name. The collected works was to be entrusted to Dr. P.N. Chopra as its Chief Editor. It was assisted by an Advisory Board, consisting of professional scholars and

historians and headed by Nijalingappa. The first Sardar Patel Memorial Lecture was delivered by Prof. Michael Lyon of Aberdeen University. Eight volumes have been published so far. Three more were in the press. Nijalingappa's involvement in this enterprise is a testimony to his remarkable quality of taking his commitments with utmost seriousness. When he took up a cause, he would go about it with single-minded devotion.

His 95th birth-day was organised by the United Congress Forum in Delhi on 10th December 1996. Leaders from various groups within the Congress and his own followers flocked to greet the veteran statesman on his birth-day. It was a simple function at the Karnataka Bhavan. Those who attended included Chandrasekhar and Narasimha Rao. As one with keen interest in agricultural matters, Nijalingappa asked Chandrasekhar about his farm in suburban Delhi and the fruits he grew there. Then he told Rao, "I congratulate you for keeping calm in the circumstances you are faced with. I find your attitude rare." Rao responded, "Yes, we have to keep equanimity in ups and downs." With Rao, Nijalingappa grew nostalgic and talked about the good old days when one could be optimistic. Nijalingappa recalled that they "had the best of every section, be it a lawyer, a doctor or a businessman. What a contrast today!" The two were interrupted by Saleem Ahmed, the newly appointed Youth Congress General Secretary. Ahmed sought Nijalingappa's blessings. Nijalingappa told him, "You are valuable for us. In youth we have hopes." Rao added, "We have to phase it out. Whatever we have done good, bad or indifferent is done and all we need to do is to phase out with honour and prestige." Well, that was what Nijalingappa had achieved but could one say the same about Rao ? The first to arrive for the function was Ramakrishna Hegde accompanied by Veerendra Patil, both former Chief Ministers of Karnataka

and proteges of Nijalingappa who had launched them into politics. They were together nick-named as "Lava-Kausha" of Karnataka politics.

Alarmed over the "deterioration" in all walks of life, especially politics, Nijalingappa held in New Delhi a meeting of about half a dozen leaders on 6th February 1997. The purpose was to revive the Old Congress. It was a two-hour long discussion, and the participants included former Prime Minister Chandrasekhar, former Chief Minister of Karnataka, Ramakrishna Hegde, Congress Working Committee member Rajesh Pilot, former Speaker of Lok Sabha, Shivraj Patil, Devi Lal, C. Subramaniam, Karan Singh, Mir Quasim and S.N. Mishra. Later, briefing the press after the meeting, Chandrasekhar said that the discussions revolved round the country's problems and not unity in the Congress. Speaking separately to the press, Pilot said that the general feeling of the group was that the Congress needed to be strengthened. This was possible by restoring to it older values cherished by the party. Pilot promised to convey to the Working Committee the views of old Congressmen. When asked whether the party would welcome back Chandrasekhar and Hegde, Pilot said that the Congress Working Committee had already passed a resolution, inviting former Congressmen to return to its fold. Nijalingappa said that some of the parties wanted further discussion on the issue of reviving the Old Congress. Sitaram Kesri, Congress President, and Narasimha Rao, had been invited to the meeting, but they had kept away. Apparently, the efforts to revive the Old Congress by uniting Congress leaders now scattered in various other parties, did not succeed. On the following day, Nijalingappa announced that the idea had been dropped, and, instead, it was decided to launch a nation-wide movement to root out corruption. Nijalingappa said that the leaders who met

were of the view that re-unification of Congress leaders would not serve the purpose and it would lead to more confusion. What needs to be emphasised here is not that Nijalingappa failed in his efforts but that he was prepared to invest time and energy in finding ways to tackle the country's mounting problems. It might just as well have worked to some extent. In the event, it did not. This case also points to what some regard as a weakness of the man - his capacity for optimism which often outran situational possibilities. This idealistic streak in him is also his strength, because, as a true Gandhian, he believed that if one did not begin with hope and try, one remained passive. In short, it is better to try and fail than not try at all on the basis of negative or pessimistic or cynical assumptions. The issue of corruption preoccupied him now as one of the greatest evils facing the country. Addressing a crowded press conference in Bangalore on 19th March 1997, he demanded a CBI probe into the assets of all the sitting and former legislators, MPs, Ministers, Chief Ministers, Prime Minister, and bureaucrats who were in office from 1969. The year is significant because it was the year in which the Congress split and Indira Gandhi started to exercise her authoritarian regime based on corrupt practices on an unprecedented scale. He said honest officials should conduct the probe, and the guilty should be punished, their property confiscated. He suggested that by confiscating the black money of dishonest politicians and bureaucrats, the financial needs of the country could be met and this helped us in avoiding foreign funding. He announced that he would soon come up with a programme against corruption. He had already written to some 55 eminent persons from all walks of life to take their suggestions. After collecting their suggestions, he would formulate his future plan of action. He declared "... My aim is to frame a different ... approach to meet the present situation where corruption is rampant and also work for

economic development ." He said that the eminent persons he was consulting were not necessarily politicians but he refused to reveal their identity. However, he said that he had contacted former Chief Election Commissioner T.N. Sheshan and crusader from Maharashtra, Anna Hazare. His idea was to cleanse the polity so that national development could occur. But he was categorical that he would not launch a new political party to fight corruption. What he had in mind was "a movement" and he added, "... as a humble servant of the people, even at the age of 95 years, I am fighting for preventing corruption, dishonesty and inefficiency in public life." When asked about his opinion on Narasimha Rao, Nijalingappa said that he had known Rao for the last five decades and that "according to law, one is honest unless punished." However, he said that he had lost faith in Congress in general. He had abandoned his plan for reviving the Old Congress as impractical. There were many kinds of Congressmen such as "Old", "Indira" and so on and this created confusion. He was clear now that "There is no meaning in working towards the revival of the Congress now ..." On the performance of Deve Gowda Government, he said that nine months were too short a time to judge it, but "Centre is now thinking more in terms of agriculture, rural development and revival of small scale units, which I have been advocating for the last four decades." He refused to make any further comment on Hegde's Lok Shakti beyond saying, "Wait and see." Worried by the population problem, he urged the Centre to introduce a law to prohibit couples from having more than one child. This should be applied to all communities. On the current controversy in Karnataka over Dr. P.V. Narayana's novel, Dharmakarana, he said that the novelist was "absolutely wrong" and that he had committed a "sin" by distorting the facts about Akkanagamma and Channabasavanna. However, he did not go into the larger question of censorship of creative

writing. He confined himself to history only, and cited the authority of Singirajapurana and other 15th century works to claim that Shivaswamy was the husband of Akkanagamma. He asserted that the novelist was wrong about her, her marriage and the birth of her son, Channabasavanna. What this extraordinary encounter of the old leader with the Press shows, is his passionate interest in ongoing events, whether political or literary-cultural, even at the age of 96. Not just interest but a well-informed interest! It also shows that he was not a person confined narrowly to politics but a person concerned with the whole range of human activities.

Later on 24 August 1997, Nijalingappa participated in a function in Chennai to felicitate C.Subramaniam on his receiving an award as a freedom fighter. He took the opportunity to express his regret that the programme of compulsory primary education had not been taken up in earnestness, and that the Directive Principles of State Policy had been neglected, leading to the present plight of the country. The only provision of the Constitution in the chapter on Directive Principles implemented was separation of the judiciary from the executive, but no provision relating to rural development was implemented. Wealth and power were now concentrated in a few hands. He said that they had to go a long way to attain the goals postulated during the freedom struggle and enshrined in the Constitution. He deplored the growing communalism in the country, and said that this called for a re-thinking on our social system. He lamented that corruption was on the increase. The only remedy was for the people to wake up and act to bring about a radical change.

On 3 October 1997, Nijalingappa appealed to the people to help eradicate the many evils afflicting the nation and move

forward to re-build the country on Gandhian principles. He was speaking on the occasion of launching the "Gandhi Forum", a non-political organisation, to mark Gandhiji's birth anniversary. He said that, in the last 50 years, the country had done well in such fields as defence and science, but it was facing a situation in which moral values preached by Gandhiji had almost disappeared. He was speaking at the Gandhi Samadhi in Delhi. The Forum had formulated a five-point programme of action. Rajesh Pilot, the working Chairman of the Forum, declared that they would adopt Gandhian methods to achieve Gandhian goals. He said they would offer the Government concrete suggestions about fighting corruption and hoped that the Government would accept them. If they failed to accept, the Forum would mobilise the people employing Gandhian methods of non-violence. The action plan of the Forum involved that the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, and legislators should declare their assets within 60 days and lay a copy of it on the table of their respective Houses. The Forum aimed to restore integrity, impartiality and transparency in the administration. He assured that the Forum would extend "moral, legal and other possible support" to an upright official discharging his duties. Thus, Nijalingappa proved himself as a man of action even at this ripe old age, an example for all of us to emulate.

At a meeting in Karnataka Bhavan in New Delhi on October 1997, Nijalingappa was chosen as the President of the Association of Constituent Assembly members. The members of the Association extended their support to the Gandhi Forum formed earlier to combat corruption and criminalisation of politics. The participants included Kusum Kant Jain, Kaluram Virulkar, Motiram Baigra, Begum Azeeza Rasul, Balvant Singh Mehta, Chaudhury Ranbir Singh, Bhagwan Din, and Nihal Singh Takshak. Fifteen surviving members of the Constituent

Assembly were still around, and, astonishingly enough, the Assembly still exists technically because its Chairman and the then President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad, had adjourned the House sine die. In a letter to the Forum, Prime Minister I.K.Gujral, promised his support to its activities, as his own topmost priority was to fight corruption. Nijalingappa thanked the PM for his support.

In December 1997, Nijalingappa turned 96, but age does not seem to have diminished his insatiable love for life and his active involvement in the ongoing life around him. A simple public function was got up in Chitradurga to mark his 96th birthday. It was a ceremony in which the grateful citizens of the town paid their respects to the distinguished politician, statesman, and, above all, servant of the people. As expected, Nijalingappa turned the occasion into one for serious and profound reflection on current affairs in the country and the world at large. He pointed out shrewdly that the people of India, though lacking in formal education, were capable of intelligent grasp of things. Like his Master, Gandhiji, Nijalingappa was here making a distinction between formal education and education derived from the experience of living. He referred to the coming elections and said the immediate question was for the citizens to decide as to whom they should cast the vote. He said it was difficult to decide in the present situation of political fragmentation and political corruption. He himself found it difficult to decide. The Congress Party which got India freedom was today in shambles. Hence, the people should discard party considerations and vote for candidates who were honest, sincere and trustworthy, with clean personal records. He urged them to eschew communal loyalties, and vote for the most deserving candidates. He was sorry that, even after fifty years of independent existence, 70% of the country's population was

in bad shape. The reason was that the previous national governments did not promote the interests of the common folk. He was afraid that the Governments to come were ready to take foreign financial support to establish huge factories. But he exhorted them to abandon this wrong path, and shift the focus to the development and welfare of the rural population, which constituted the real India. He was proud that, in his life, he never committed any wrong knowingly ("kandu, kandu"), but if he was guilty of this, he was not aware of it. In fact, this was also what he told this biographer when he met him in Chitradurga recently. He did not know how much longer he was going to live. He urged them to acquire the virtues and good qualities they had so affectionately attributed to him on this occasion. Recalling his days as Chief Minister, he cited some of his achievements, which included: relief for the old, monthly remuneration for freedom fighters, and financial support to artists and writers, the completion of Sharavati Hydel Project within six years, and development of irrigation facility. He regretted that Chitradurga remained the most backward of districts in the State. It had very little irrigation facility. He appealed to the Centre to come forward to support the Upper Bhadra project.

This narrative proposes to stop at this point, leaving Nijalingappa at 96, still going strong as a servant of the people, ceaselessly worried about their welfare. While his biography may have an end, Nijalingappa will be still there, surviving it and perhaps attracting future biographers to come forward to take the story further. At the end of this biographical exercise, one comes away with the portrait of Nijalingappa as a genuinely great man whose greatness is easy to miss behind his modesty and simplicity. It is a most remarkable life on any account, and a life which can serve all of us as a source of inspiration

as well as wisdom. It is an awe-inspiring sight to see this frail old man of 96, stll his spirit soaring into the skies, as he sits in the cane-chair in the verandah of his modest residence, Vinaya, in the picturesque hilly town of Chitradurga. The physical Nijalingappa cannot be immortal but the impact he has made on the history of Karnataka and India will be immortal, surviving the extinction of the body. Nijalingappa himself is not worried about death, and is prepared to accept it, as he has been accepting life's gifts throughout his private and public life. His passion for life, his joy in it, and the sheer identity he has with the cosmos are incredible. For such persons, the distinction between life and death has very little meaning since they constitute a continuum. After death? That is the question that bothers Nijalingappa least!

# 8. NIJALINGAPPA'S VISION

After a detailed account of Nijalingappa's life and thought, one naturally wonders what gives unity and structure to his life and thought. There is no doubt that, like all historical personages who have made their impact on the world they lived in, Nijalingappa, too, was inspired by a vision, whether consciously or unconsciously. Perhaps, it was partly conscious and partly unconscious, but it must have been always there. Looking back on his life, one can reconstruct this vision. A vision is a comprehensive picture of what a person desires as the appropriate goals of life and it embodies a set of principles and values. At the most comprehensive level, his vision may be described as a humanist vision, rooted in man as both a natural being and rational moral being. In this vision, God is not a necessary component, though he may be invoked for convenience. Nijalingappa is an agnostic on the question of God because he has not resolved the question either way, believing neither in the existence nor the non-existence of God. In this vision, man is conceptualised as a self-determining creature who can make his own fate and create his own history. But this human potentiality is subject to self-imposed moral duties dictated by man's rationality and the rational perception that he is not alone as an atomic creature but also one among other men and other natural creatures. That is why Nijalingappa rejected the notion of Karma and re-birth. From this humanist vision, he derived his values and principles, which include commitment to individual freedom, equality and brother-hood.

In its political aspect, this vision meant a profound commitment to values of secularism and democracy. It is because of this liberal commitment that Nijalingappa is hostile

to Communism and communalism, Communism because it violates democracy, communalism because it violates secularism. But this apparently Western-oriented vision, going back to the European Enlightenment, was heavily overhauled by indigenous tradition. On the one hand, Nijalingappa could draw on the rich democratic and humanist tradition of Basaveswara, and on the other hand, he drew on the no less rich Gandhian tradition of morally governed politics. His relationship to Gandhism is clear on certain issues such as the need for principles in politics or the need for decentralised political and economic power, but it also involved a fairly important complication. It is well known that Gandhiji, in his most fundamental theoretical text, Hind Swaraj had rejected categorically the modern political culture with its institutional form of Parliamentary democracy. Nijalingappa does not seem to be aware of this complication. Of course, it is true that he tries to apply the Gandhian principles to an already on-going political system, but he does not offer any Gandhian critique of its basic structure. But in this, he is not alone because modern Indian political culture tends to reject Gandhism on fundamental issues while accommodating it as a secondary moral palliative. For instance, our Panchayat Raj or even the Directive Principles of State Policy, cannot be called truly Gandhian, though they do contain components wrung from the Gandhian vision. This was also the problem with JP, and his Gandhism, with the best of intentions, tended to promote a non-Gandhian liberal polity. May be one should simply concede that Gandhism in the form Gandhiji himself formulated is beyond our reach. In that case, it makes perfect sense to argue that we should deflect the existing institutions in a Gandhian direction. In this sense, Nijalingappa can be called a Gandhian, but, in this sense, the difference between Nehru and Gandhi would not be as basic as Nijalingappa makes it out to be. Nehru can then be faulted, not for being anti-Gandhian but for being incompetently Gandhian. In any case, there is the

question of why Gandhiji himself nominated Nehru as his successor. This is a paradox that is far from resolved. At the same time, it is well to remember that Nijalingappa does not accept any authority, including that of Gandhiji, blindly and uncritically. Hence, when one describes him as a Gandhian or when he calls himself a Gandhian, what is involved is a selectively appropriated Gandhism. Nijalingappa took from Gandhiji two crucial ideas - the idea that political life is a normatively constrained life and that power must never be concentrated in a single place or a person.

Lastly, his vision is that of a nationalist, the vision of a person who believed in the ontological status of an entity called the Indian nation. He was committed to this vision, but the nature of the nation he had in mind was that of a federation of diverse regional systems with their own distinctive histories and cultures. However, he not only did not see any conflict between the abstract nation and its concrete regional components, but he saw them as mutually interpenetrated and inseparable. This was the ideological basis on which the Karnataka Unification he led was organised. He has more than once expressed the view that if this complementarity broke down and a conflict arose between the nation and its linguistic components, he would without hesitation reject such regionalism and take the side of the nation. That is why we have paradox of a Nijalingappa who spent most of his youth and middle age in the cause of a linguistic state, is prepared to be critical of it today on the ground that it runs counter to the legitimate interests of the nation.

In the final analysis, this is a vision that has been brewed in an Indian climate, and it has fused such desperate elements as Western modernity and Indian religious morality. In terms

of a larger historical narrative, Nijalingappa and his generation, not even excluding Gandhiji, should be seen as significant figures who mediated between the colonial heritage and the indigenous tradition. But the generation that has come after this generation seems to be running into the danger of being gobbled up by a globalisation myth, which, when all is said and done, is nothing better than a new kind of colonialism and a new kind of slavery. But Nijalingappa is optimistic that this catastrophe will be averted because the youth and the common people will oppose it in the face of elite recapitulation to it. Nijalingappa's vision is a profoundly optimistic vision. But it is not utopian because it is informed by what one may call Gandhian moral realism.

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## Last Darshan of Gandhiji

There was a wrong information given to Mahatma Gandhi that the Harijans were not treated properly in Old Mysore prior to 1948, though very good treatment was provided to them.

Mahatma Gandhi had given an appointment to Shri S. Nijalingappa, Shri H.C. Dasappa and others at 5.00 p.m. on 30.01.1948 in Birla Bhavan, New Delhi, to discuss the issue. Old Mysore leaders were on time to meet and explain the real facts to Mahatma Gandhi. Unfortunately, Nathuram Godse had shot Mahatma Gandhi dead by the time they reached the place. Shri S. Nijalingappa and others rushed inside the Birla Bhavan. There was a panic and silence at Birla Bhavan. By that time Gandhiji was dead. Shri S. Nijalingappa was the first person to communicate the news of death of Mahatma Gandhi to the President, the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhai Patel and others. Shri H.C. Dasappa searched for milk to pour it in the mouth of Gandhiji with the belief that he may regain life!

S. Nijalingappa

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5-11-88

ಮಾನ್ಯ ಶ್ರೀ ಬೊಮ್ಮಯಿ ಅವರಿಗೆ ನಮಸ್ಕಾರಗಳು,

ತಮ್ಮ ಪತ್ರದ ನಕಲು ನಿನ್ನೆ ದಿನ ನನ್ನ ಕೈಸೇರಿತು ನನ್ನ ಪತ್ನಿ ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ಮುರಿಗಮ್ಮ ಅವರ ನಿಧನದಿಂದಾದ ದುಃಖದಲ್ಲಿ ತಾವು ಭಾಗಿಗಳಾಗಿ ಕಳಿಸಿರುವ ಸಹಾನುಭೂತಿ, ಅನುಕಂಪಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಧನ್ಯವಾದಗಳು. ನಾನು ತಮ್ಮಗಳಿಗೆಲ್ಲಾ ಋಣಿ.

ಅದೇ ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನನ್ನ ಆರೋಗ್ಯದ ಬಗ್ಗೂ ನನ್ನ ಇಳಿವರಿ ವಯಸ್ಸಿನ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳು ತಾಳಿರುವ ಸಹಾನುಭೂತಿಗಾಗಿಯೂ ನನ್ನ ಧನ್ಯವಾದಗಳು. ನನ್ನ ಆರೋಗ್ಯದ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿಗೆ ಬರಬೇಕೆಂದು ಕೆಲವು ವರ್ಷಗಳಿಂದ ಸಂಬಂಧಿಸಿದ ವೈದ್ಯರು ವತ್ತಾಯ ಪಡಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ ನನ್ನ ಪತ್ನಿಯ ಅಭಿಪ್ರಾಯದಿಂದಾಗಿ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿಗೆ ಬರಲಾಗಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಈಗ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿಗೆ ಬರಲು ಅಡ್ಡಿ ಇಲ್ಲ. ಆದರೆ ನನಗೆ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿಗೆ ಬಂದರೆ ವಸತಿಗಾಳು ಇತರ ಸೌಲಭ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ಸರ್ಕಾರದವರು ವದಗಿಸುವುದಾಗಿಯೂ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಿದ್ದೀರಿ. ಧನ್ಯವಾದಗಳು ತಾವು ನನ್ನ ಜೊತೆ ಚಿತ್ರದುರ್ಗಕ್ಕೆ ದೂರವಾಣಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನನ್ನ ಕಷ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸಿ ಹೇಳುವ ಕೃಪೆ ಮಾಡಿದಿರಿ. ಸಾಕಷ್ಟು ಆಲೋಚನೆ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದೇನೆ ತಮ್ಮ ಸಲಹೆಗೆ ನನ್ನ ಧನ್ಯವಾದಗಳು ಅರ್ಪಿಸುತ್ತಾ ನನ್ನ ಖರ್ಚಿನ ಮೇಲೆಯೇ ನಾನು ಬೆಂಗಳೂರಿನಲ್ಲಿದ್ದು ತಮ್ಮ ಮತ್ತು ಜನತೆಯ ಹಾಗೂ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರದ ಸೇವೆಯನ್ನು ಇನ್ನು ಮುಂದೆಯೂ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಬೇಕೆಂದು ನಿರ್ಧರಿಸಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ಅದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ನನ್ನ ಸಂಪನ್ಮೂಲಗಳನ್ನು ಆಲೋಚಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ.

ನನ್ನ ಸೇವೆ ಯಾವಾಗಲೂ, ಸದಾ ಸಿದ್ಧವೆಂದು ತಿಳಿಸಬಯಸುತ್ತೇನೆ.

ತಮ್ಮ ಸಹಾನುಭೂತಿಗಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಮತ್ತೊಮ್ಮೆ ಧನ್ಯವಾದಗಳು.

ತಮ್ಮ ವಿಶ್ವಾಸಿ
ನಿಜಲಿಂಗಪ್ಪ

ಶ್ರೀ ಎಸ್.ಆರ್. ಬೊಮಯ್ಯ ಅವರು
ಮುಖ್ಯಮಂತ್ರಿಗಳು, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು.

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# APPENDICES

## 1. List of other Achievements of S.N. as Chief Minister (not included in the text)

- Bangalore Dairy.
- Encouragement to Khadi and Village Industries in Rural areas by forming Khadi and Village Industries Board.
- Construction of Tungabhadra Canal.

  The farmers were unable to pay the cost of construction of canals but the Chief Minister ordered to construct canals and recover the amount in 10 years.
- Mangalore Harbour.
- Land to Basava Bhavan.
- Quarters to Police and establihshment of Housing Corporation.
- Establishment of Paper mills - West Coast Paper Mills etc.
- Establishment of Sugar factories in Co-operative Sectors.
- Establishment of Agro - Industries Corporation.
- Development of Woollen Industry.
- Roads to Hyderabad Karnataka area and Bombay Karnataka area, which were neglected before integration to Karnataka state.
- Starting of Sainik School at Bijapur.
- Starting of Rani Kittur Channamma Residential School for Girls at Kittur
- Karwar Port.
- Irrigation : Bhadra Canal.
- Encouragement to Co-operative Sectors.
- Establishment of Kanteerava Studio.
- Establishment of Mines at Ingaladal (Ingaladal Copper Mines, Hatti Gold Mines).
- Land to non-Gazetted Officers Association in Cubbon Park at Bangalore.

## 2. Indira Gandhi - Nijalingappa Correspondence on the Congress Split

**(Letter from the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi and five others to the Congress President, Shri S. Nijalingappa dated October 9, 1969)**

On August 25, the Congress Working Committee, after reviewing the political situation, passed a resolution calling upon all the Congressmen to create an atmosphere of unity in the organization. There have been complaints that the resolution was not observed in its letter and spirit, by many important Congress leaders.

The President's arbitrary orders, removing Mr. C. Subramaniam from the Congress Working Committee and Mr. Kamalapati Tripathi and Mr. Kakani Venkatratnam and some others from various offices in the organization on the basis of some resolutions passed two decades ago will aggravate the situation, making the implementation of the Unity resolution more difficult.

The Parliamentary Board met on October 7 and these matters could have been mentioned therein or they could have been kept pending consideration by the Congress Working Committee which has been convened to meet later this month.

The action of the President is bound to have serious political repercussions and should, therefore, be considered by the Congress Working Committee at the earliest date.

We, therefore, request that the Congress Working Committee, which has been convened to meet on October 30, may be called to meet around the 15th of the month.

In the meanwhile, the orders issued by the President should be kept in abeyance. We feel that it is necessary also to have an early AICC meeting to consider the entire political situation.

The President may kindly take steps to convene the meeting of the AICC before Nov. 17.

**(Letter from the Congress President, Shri S. Nijalingappa, to the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, dated October, 9, 1969)**

My dear Indiraji,

I am pained to receive the communication sent by you and our colleagues of the Working Committee dated today.

You have stated that I have arbitrarily ordered removal of Sri Subramaniam from the Working Committee. I wish you had checked this matter with me before coming to this conclusion and allowing it to be broadcast.

I have sent no communication to Sri Subramaniam. I have never been in the habit of working arbitrarily. Such a charge should not be loosely levelled by responsible colleagues.

You are not unaware of the Congress Constitution which demands that a member of the Working Committee has to be a member of the AICC.

In the case of Sri Subramaniam, he was an ex-officio member of the AICC in view of his being the President of the TNCC.

Now that he has ceased to be the President of the TNCC, the position needs to be gone into. I was intending to write to Sri Subramaniam on this point. Not to have written to him about it and sought his consultation on it would be arbitrary ignoring even violation of the Congress Constitution.

Does devotion to unity, demand that the Congress Constitution should be ignored?

From Andhra Pradesh I had received letters that the PCC President and the Secretary have joined the Government. But no arrangements have been made to elect their successors. In accordance with the resolution of the CWC, Sri Kamalapati Tripathi has resigned long back from the presidentship of the PCC and a meeting of PCC to elect a fresh incumbent to the office was called and adjourned. It was, therefore, necessary for me to remind the PCCs in the usual course.

It is surprising and painful to find you commenting that such a communication sent to the PCCs, to quote your own words, "on the basis of some resolutions passed two decades ago will aggravate the situation, making the implementation of the Unity resolution more difficult".

I thought that resolutions of the Congress are binding on us, unless they are either revised or rescinded, particularly resolutions governing the procedure and functioning of the party.

Is it your thesis that lapse of some time automatically erases the decisions taken ?

Will arbitrary functioning on my part to suit the wishes of any party help the implementation of unity?

As no action has been taken by me which need have caused the concern you have shown in your communication, I presume that there is no need to alter the programme already decided upon for the meeting of the CWC and for it to decide the date of the meeting of the AICC.

What new developments you have in mind that necessitated urgent consideration of "the entire political situation" are not clear to me.

**(Letter from the Congress President, Shri S. Nijalingappa to the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi)**

Camp Office: Bangalore
28th October, 1969

My dear Indiraji,

I wrote to you on the 9th of October in answer to the letter that you and five other colleagues wrote to me demanding an early meeting of the Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee to consider my 'arbitrary orders' and "the entire political situation". My immediate concern in that letter was to tell you that I had passed no 'arbitrary orders' for the removal of Mr. Subramaniam, or any one else, and to deny your charge that my arbitrary actions were "making the implementation of the Unity resolution more difficult."

But I must confess that your letter of the 8th came to me as a great shock. As has become usual with the letters that you and your close associates write to me, the contents of this letter too appeared in the press before your letter reached me. I cannot readily recall another occasion in the long history of the Indian National Congress when members of the Working Committee wrote a letter of this kind to the President of the Congress and accused him of acting against the interests of the organization. Nor can I recall other occasions on which members of the Working Committee continued to be members of the Working Committee and carried on a campaign of vilification against the President, and took the initiative in demanding an AICC Session to consider the actions of the President. In the past, even in the face of grave differences on policy, the members of the Working Committee have preserved a spirit of camaraderie, and that is how the Working Committee earned

the reputation of being the High Command, and endeared itself to the workers of the organization by setting an example of solidarity, loyalty and mutual respect.

The action that you and the other colleagues have taken is therefore, a sad and unprecedented departure from the traditions of democratic fair play and comradeship that have helped to preserve the unity of the Congress. You have ignored the basic demands of courtesy and justice and made grave allegations against me on the basis of hearsay or suspicion without even caring to verify the facts from me. Nor is this the first occasion on which you have considered it unnecessary to extend this elementary courtesy to the President of the Congress.

You will remember that even though I had repeatedly suggested to you in May, June and early July that we should decide on the Congress candidate for the Presidentship, you replied that we should postpone the decision since there was no hurry, and did not in fact, mention any name to me till two hours before we met in the Parliamentary Board to decide on the candidate, on the 12th of July.

You will recall that at the crucial hour of the recent Presidential election, you and Shri Jagjivan Ram and Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed came out with a public allegation that I had entered into a secret understanding with the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra Party. At that time too, you did not even care to call me or talk to me to ascertain the truth before mounting a campaign against me and using the story as a ruse to sabotage the election of the Congress candidate. Shri Jagjivan Ram and Shri Fakhurddin Ali Ahmed had met me earlier on the day that they wrote to me making this allegation, and yet they had mentioned nothing about it even when I appealed to

them to work for the Congress candidate. Subsequently, when the story that you circulated had already done irreparable damage to the Congress and its candidate, and when you were asked to prove your allegations in the Working Committee, you admitted that you had no evidence, and the story was untenable. And yet, you did not even express regret for the defeat of the Congress candidate or the way in which you had encouraged and sanctified indiscipline on the basis of a handy "untenable" story. In fact, there were many reports in the Press that you accepted congratulations on the victory of Mr. Giri, and hailed Mr. Giri's victory as the victory of what you stood for.

I must confess that I have found it difficult to understand all this in terms of the accepted canons of conduct in a democratic party or in a Parliamentary democracy. I have no doubt that the vast majority of Congressmen and lovers of democracy in our country have been baffled and distressed by your reluctance to accept the decision of the Parliamentary Board; your wrath of being out-voted and your references to the grave "consequences that will follow"; your peremptory dismissal of Shri Morarji Desai which could only be understood as one of the grave consequences that you foretold; your repeated refusal to issue a whip to the members of the Congress Parliamentary Party and the repeated requests that I and the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Party made to you; your support to the allegations made by Shri Jagjivan Ram and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed; your contention that the "untenable" story had "removed the basis" of the candidature of the Congress nominee; and your support to the demand for a "free vote" or "conscience vote" knowing full well that this was to be a vote for a candidate of the Communist Party and the Muslim League, and that such indiscipline would only lead to the defeat of the Congress candidate and even the disintegration of the Party.

You know very well that no political organization can exist if it permits or encourages attitudes and actions that undermine its integrity. The policies and programmes of a democratic party are determined by free and frank discussion, and on the basis of the views expressed by the majority. The Constitution of the Party provides for organs to determine policy and select candidates. Members of the Party accept the obligation to be loyal to the policies of the Party, and to vote and work for candidates chosen by the competent organs of the Party. If any member or group of members denounces policies that have been decided upon, or refuses to vote for candidates who have been chosen, on the ground that they do not agree with the policy or approve of the person, the organization loses its integrity and identity, and its effectiveness as an instrument for political action in a Parliamentary democracy. It develops a split personality, and loses the confidence of the people. Voters cannot be sure of the policies of such an organization. The organization itself cannot be sure that its policies will be implemented. The organization cannot be sure that its candidates will be elected. If the Party is in Government, the Government cannot be sure of the support of the members of the Party. Such a Government will have to work in perpetual uncertainty about its very existence. It is clear that Parliamentary democracy cannot function if Parties get infected by such a virus. What makes Parliamentary democracy possible, reliable and effective is the discipline that binds the members of a Party and invests the Party with an identity and definiteness. If this discipline disappears, Parties and Parliamentary democracy itself, are bound to disintegrate.

I had thought that this lesson had been learnt after the defeat of the Congress candidate for Presidentship. It is clear that unity can be maintained only on the basis of a disciplined

acceptance of the decisions of bodies competent to decide on policies and candidates. The unity resolution had accepted this axiom, and urged the need for unity, pointing out that both the Parliamentary Wing and the Organisational Wing had their respective spheres of responsibility within which they had to work for the common interests of the organisation. I have no doubt in my mind that I have scrupulously adhered to the letter and spirit of this resolution, cautioning that the past should not be precedent, exhorting for discipline and unity, and asking for strict adherence to policies, procedures and discipline in the organisational and legislature wings.

I was therefore surprised to receive your letter accusing me of acting against the spirit of the Unity Resolution. It appears to me that you have made this allegation forgetting how the need for the Unity Resolution arose, and how you and some of those who have signed the letter have been speaking and functioning since the Bangalore Session of the AICC, before and after the Unity Resolution.

Your speeches and actions ever since the Bangalore Session of the AICC have made me wonder what your attitude to the Organisation or the Party is. In your speeches you often refer to the special responsibilities of the Prime Minister. No one denies this. But in a democracy, the Prime Minister is not a "Swayambhu". It cannot be forgotten that the Prime Minister is the elected leader of the Parliamentary Party which consists of persons who in turn have been elected as the Party's nominees. It is the Party's manifesto that is placed before the people. It is the Party's workers who campaign, canvass and get the votes polled. And the Party will continue, and has to continue to function even if it fails to secure a majority. The relation between the Legislature wing and the organisation cannot therefore be

formulated on the assumption that the Party will always be in power.

No one can take the view that once the Party gets a majority in the House and a Prime Minister is chosen, the necessity for the Organisation disappears, and the democratic functions of the organs of the Party to determine and review policy and to nominate candidates for elections lapse; and all that the Party has to do thereafter is to give its imprimatur to what the Prime Minister says, and to glorify the leader. Such an attitude is clearly inconsistent with democracy. In a democracy, no one can take away the right of the Party to formulate policy or even to change the Leader.

But your speeches and actions seem to reflect an extraordinary attitude to the role of the organisation. Though the Party adopts a candidate, you seem to think that you are free to work against the candidate of the Party if you do not like the choice of the Party. Though the Party adopts resolutions and programmes you seem to feel that you are only bound to accept and implement what appeals to you. Even in the case of what you accept from the Party's programme (like the 10-Point Programme or the decision on assuring a basic minimum by 1975), you seem to be able to convince yourself that what you have done has not been able to convince yourself that what you have done has not been the result of the Party's thinking, but the result of your personal intuition or imagination. You seem to relish the propaganda that your close associates carry on, ascribing the authorship of these measures to you, and ignoring the role of the Party. If anyone points out that the Party has all along been demanding what you have done, you seem to consider it an attempt to denigrate or belittle you. Though you are the head of the Administration clothed with

full powers to implement the programmes and fulfil the promises of the Party, you seem to think that it is the organisation that has to be blamed for tardiness of implementation. You are uneasy when the organisation or even the organs of the Parliamentary Party want to review the policies or actions of the Administration. You give the impression that you will be happy if the role of the organisation can be abridged in formulating policy, reviewing administrative action, and setting up candidates in elections. There are many occasions on which you have shown your disinclination to detailed discussions of policy in the Working Committee and dealt peremptorily with the desires of the Executive Committee of the Parliamentary Party to discuss matters which definitely fall within their sphere of competence and responsibility.

Your recent letter makes me wonder whether you grant the President of the Organisation the right to enforce the constitutional provisions of the organisation, if the application of rules and resolutions affect those in whom you are interested. Your attitude seems to be that the candidates that the Party sets up for elections should be persons of your liking, and the rules of the organisation should be applied when it suits your interests in certain individuals and groups, and ignored when that is in the interest of individuals and groups you support.

You often say that you are against groups, and you say that there is a Syndicate that functions as a group and works against you and your "progressive" policies. I do not know who, in your opinion, constitutes the Syndicate But I know that the Press often uses the term to refer to those who worked for the election of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, and later on, for your election in 1965, and 1967. Shri Morarji Desai certainly was not part of that group since on all the three occasions, it was

he who had to be persuaded to withdraw, or be defeated, to enable Shastriji and you to win. At that time, you did not find the group or Syndicate reactionary. You did not think that their position in the organisation was based on the "bogus" primary membership that they controlled. Nor did you think they were a handful of people who were arrogating to themselves the right to choose the Party's nominee for the high office. You knew very well that it was their efforts that led to your election as the Leader of the Parliamentary Party.

Now you say that they are a reactionary "coterie" that wants to usurp the rights of the organisation. You say that the people in the "Syndicate" are against your "progressive" policies, that they are denigrating you, and belittling the office of the Prime Minister.

In some of the speeches that you delivered after the Nationalisation of Banks, you are reported to have said that some of the old leadership were against your progressive policies, especially Bank Nationalisation, since they were with the capitalists. The papers quoted you as saying that you know the poor and you would always be with the poor. You do not seem to have considered it necessary to say that the Congress has always stood for the poor, and the Congress would always stand with, for the poor. You do not say that the Congress has been for the Nationalisation of Banks; the impression that many leaders of the Congress, including some of those who are described as members of the Syndicate demanded the Nationalisation of Banks years before you sent your note to the AICC at Bangalore. In fact, it was Shri Kamaraj, Chavan, Atulya Ghosh and others who advocated Bank Nationalisation much before your note. Even in this note, you only contemplated Bank Nationalisation as an alternative that would have to be

considered if social control did not succeed. Shri Ashok Mehta recently issued a statement recalling the attitude that you had taken on this question in previous discussions in the Cabinet and the Working Committee. Yet, Nationalisation is now painted as a stroke of your genius, and it is made to look as though others were against it since they were reactionary, and you have carried it through inspite of their opposition and manoeuvres. The facts are quite different, and the circumstances under which you took the step are too well known to need recounting or comment. But the picture that you have been painting has perhaps been found useful to build up your image as the "Leader of the progressive forces", and to mount a campaign against all those whom you want to be out of the way.

You seem to have made personal loyalty to you the test of loyalty to the Congress and the country. All those who glorify you are progressives. Those who are loyal to the organisation and its policies, but are not willing to accept the position that you should have the sole right to determine policy and candidates, those who feel that in a democracy, the organs of the Party should take decisions on the basis of free and frank discussions and no one should claim a vote, are considered reactionary and disloyal. The powerful medium of the radio and the influence of the Government on the Press are used to paint them as reactionary. They are scrupulously kept out of positions (like delegations) to which the Government can nominate them, and are eased out of positions in the name of 'cohesiveness' and 'purposiveness'. The baits and threats that the Government can use are being used freely and openly to secure regimentation and personal loyalty. All this creates the impression that, in your scheme of things, there is no place in the Party or Government for anyone who differs even slightly from your personal views and likes and dislikes.

You say you are against groups. But even the recent letter that you sent me was signed by six members of the Working

Committee, all of whom, with a solitary exception, are persons who stood for a 'free vote'. Ministers of your Cabinet (Council of Ministers) are going round the country exhorting and influencing and inducing membes of the AICC and members of Parliament to sign statements and requisitions; encouraging the emergence of factions that qualify to be regarded as 'loyal' factions whose loyalty to you as an individual is greater than their loyalty to the democratic functioning of the Party, factions that denigrate and campaign against elected office-bearers whom you or your admirers consider undesirable, or threaten the stability of Congress Ministries if the Chief Ministers happen to be persons whom you dislike; and a general impression is being created that you use the patronage that your office commands to reward the storm troopers of this group. An impression is being created that you do not even mind ignoring the duly constituted PCC in a State and functioning through a group of individuals that enjoys your confidence; that you do not mind taking the support of some of the opposition parties that are running Governments in some States to bolster your individual position even if this results in weakening and demoralising the units of our organisation in these States. The ease with which the assistance of the Communist Party, the Muslim League and the DMK was used to defeat the Congress candidate for the Presidentship has strengthened this impression.

It appears that everything is permissible and pardonable to those who are recognised supporters of the personality cult that is threatening democracy in the organisation. They may have committed serious breaches of our laws like the Income-tax laws. They may not have submitted the declarations of their assets to the AICC as the rules of the Party demand. They may have collected large amounts of money from various sources in the name of the Party and not informed the Party and accounted for them to the Party.

What distresses me most and augurs ill for the Congress and the country is the pattern that peeps out from these attitudes and actions. I have my apprehension that this pattern may lead us to one-man rule in the organisation and government, and not to the strengthening of democratic socialism.

It has not been easy for me to write all this to you. It has taken me many hours and days of anxious thinking to come to the conclusion that I should put all these thoughts and fears of mine before you. But I owe a duty to the high office that I hold in the Congress. I cannot abdicate this duty. As President of the Congress it is my duty to keep a watch on attitudes and actions that may threaten the unity of the Congress and endanger the democratic functioning of the Organisation. It is my duty to point out to these dangers, and appeal to every Congressman to rise above attitudes that may destroy the unity of the Organisation, and its effectiveness as an instrument for the preservation of democracy and the achievement of Socialism. It is in that spirit that I have written this letter, and I hope you will read it in the same spirit.

I believe that even now, it is possible to undo the mischief that has been done, forge unity and strengthen the Congress for the sake of the country. I am awaiting your reaction.

I am not releasing this letter to the press.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
**Sd. S. Nijalingapa**

Smt. Indira Gandhi,
1, Safdarjang Road
New Delhi

**(Letter from the Congress President, Shri S.Nijalingappa, to the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, dated November 2,1969)**

This morning's newspaper reports say that you presided over a meeting of some members of the Working Committee yesterday. The reports say that the meeting was held at your residence. They also say that the meeting over which you presided decided, inter alia, that "any decision by the Working Committee will be improper and not binding on the Congress organisation". The meeting is also reported to have decided to convene a special meetingof the AICC in New Delhi on Nov. 22 and 23 to consider the requisition resolution to elect a new Congress President.

"I am enclosing a copy of the resolution of the Working Committee today on this reported decision. You are well aware that meetings of the AICC can only be convened by those whom the Constitution of the Congress has empowered to do so and not by individuals who have no constitutional locus standi or rights in this behalf".

"If the reports appearing in the Press to the effect that you presided over the meeting which decided to convene a session of the AICC and authorise Mr Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Mr C. Subramainam and Mr S.D.Sharma to take necessary steps for convening such a session are right, you will be deemed to have committed a serious breach of the party discipline and flouted the Constitution of the Party".

"I write this, therefore, to request you to explain your reported association with the move to convene an illegal and unconstitutional meeting of the AICC in violation of the party Constitution and resolutions of the Working Committee"

**(Letter from the Congress President, Shri S.Nijalingappa, to the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, dated November 3, 1969)**

My dear Indiraji,

I wrote to you on the 28th of October, 1969 to put before you my fears and apprehensions about your attitudes and actions since the Bangalore Session of the AICC. I attempted to draw your attention to the grave threats that your actions were posing to the unity of the Congress organisation and the traditions of democracy that we want to build up in the country. I appealed to you to turn back from the brink to which you had led yourself and renounce the ways of intrigue and disruption. I had hoped that you would not turn a deaf ear to the voice of conscience. I had hoped that you would not allow your conduct to sully the traditions of the great Indian National Congress that millions of our countrymen have built up through suffering and sacrifice, traditions that still thrill every genuine Congressman.

But I regret that you have not cared to respond to my appeal. You have not found time to reply or talk to me; but you have taken the unprecedented step of leading a boycott of the meeting of the duly constituted Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, and organising a meeting of some members of the Working Committee at your residence at the very hour set for the meeting of the Working Committee. The press reports that the members who met under your leadership passed a resoultion characterising some of my actions as unconstitutional and backing the move for a requisitiōn to remove me from the Presidentship of the Congress, and summoning a"Special Session of the AICC" to meet in Delhi on the 22nd and 23rd of November, 1969. This is an unpardonable act of gross indiscipline,a flagrant violation of the Constitution of the Congress, calculated to disrupt the unity of

the Organisation. Am I to understand that this is your reply to my appeal for a return to the ways of reason,discipline and democracy? I am afraid the action that you have taken may lead to far-reaching consequences. It has, therefore, become necessary for me to let Congressmen know what is in danger, and who is endangering the unity, ideals and policies of our great organisation. All of us are accountable to the public whom we seek to serve, and I feel that the time has therefore come for us to acquaint the public with our points of view. I am, therefore, releasing my letter of the 28th October along with this letter to the Press.

Yours sincerely,
Sd. S. Nijalingappa

**(Letter from the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi to the Congress President, Shri S.Nijalingappa dated November 3, 1969)**

Dear Shri Nijalingappa,

I have just received your letter dated 3 November 1969, where you have mentioned that you are releasing your letter to me dated 28th October, 1969, to the press.

Your letter of the 28th was received on 29 October, 1969, but in view of the large number of issues which you had raised in that letter, I felt it necessary to prepare a reply which would cover them in detail. While I was doing this, I was suddenly informed on 31 October that you had written to Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed intimating him that you were removing him from his membership of theWorking Committee. At the same time you also sent a letter to Mr. C. Subramaniam informing him that his membership in the Working Committee had lapsed.

I can only comment, at this stage, that this is rather a strange way of implementing the appeal in your letter dated 28th October

to Congressmen "to rise above attitudes that may destroy the unity of the organization and its effectiveness as an instrument for the preservation of democracy and the achievement of socialism".

I think it is my duty first to deal with the patent illegality of the actions you have taken against Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Mr. C. Subramaniam. You are aware that the Working Committee of the Congress is formed of 20 members of whom seven members are to be elected by the AICC and the rest to be appointed by the President. Under Article 5 of the Constitution, the term of every member of a Congress Committee shall ordinarily be two years. Thus in terms of these two articles, once a person becomes a member of the Working Committee whether through appointment by the President or through election by the AICC, his term ordinarily would be two years.

There is, however, no ordinarily provision in the Constitution or the rules for removing any person from the membership of the Working Committee.

The contention in your letter, that since the President has appointed a particular member to the Working Committee, he has the right to remove him if he loses confidence in that member, is not in accordance with the Constitution or the rules. It may be relevant also to refer to the power of the President to remove office-bearers which is defined in the rules.

Under the appropriate rule the President of any Congress Committee may remove any of its office bearers, appointed by him,if he is satisfied that he is not discharging his duties to the President's satisfaction. This power, however, does not extend to the removal of persons, appointed or nominated to the Committee and exclusively covers only office-bearers appointed by him.

It is also worth noting that even when such an office-bearer has to be removed, due opportunity has to be given to him to explain his position before any action is taken against him.

All these provisions of the Constitution of the Congress have been flouted by you. Apart from these objections to your obviously illegal action, it is amazing that while speaking of unity, you should take action which displays your disregard for the unity of the organization.

I should also like to deal with an argument which is being freely canvassed today. It is said that just as the Prime Minister has the undoubted power to remove any member of the Council of Ministers, so also the President of the Congress has the power to remove any member appointed by him to the Working Committee.

The powers of the Prime Minister are governed by the Constitution of India, whereas the powers of the President of the Congress are governed by the Constitution of the Congress, and these constitutions are obviously made for very different purposes - one for the proper functioning of the Executive which governs the country and is responsible to Parliament, and the other for the proper functioning of the leadership of a political party. To attempt to base an argument on such an analogy is ridiculous.

Immediately after these actions against Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and Mr. Subramaniam, you have once more, illegally and in violation of the Constitution of the Congress, removed Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma from his membership of the Working Committee. He naturally resigned his post of Secretary, because you requested him to do so.

But he was appointed as a member of the Committee some months before he took up the post of Secretary and his appointment

as a member of the Committee has nothing to do with his being an office-bearer. It is extraordinary that when he acceded to your request to resign from his post as office-bearer, you should respond with an order removing him from his position as a member of the Committee.

All these actions only show that in order to serve your own purpose, you are quite prepared to flout the provisions of the Constitution of the Congress and arbitrarily remove persons who are members of the highest policy - making body of the party.

It was these actions that made me feel that no useful purpose would be served by writing a long reply to your letter. However, since you have released your letter to the press, I think I should put on record my reply to the more important points which you have raised.

The various issues arising out of the Presidential election were fully discussed by the Working Committee in all its aspects and what is now called the Unity resolution was passed on the 25th August, and it is purposeless to traverse all the ground over again. I shall however briefly refer to some of the incorrect statements that you have made.

Your statement in para four of your letter is not true. I did not want postponement of the decision regarding a candidate for the office of President, nor did I have a candidate of my own. I was having repeated consultations and was asking for a number of names so that a consensus might be arrived at. It was unfortunate that the Parliamentary Board was compelled to take a snap decision by a majority vote without any discussion. This is hardly the manner in which major decisions should be taken in a responsible party which should function in a mature way.

You insinuate in para six of your letter that those who pleaded for a free vote, were collaborating with the Communist Party and the Muslim League as Mr Giri was the candidate put up by them. Mr. Giri contested as an Independent candidate and if he was able to win the support of many parties, that cannot be put against me and my colleagues.

You have made a reference to the Unity resolution and your strict adherence to it in letter and spirit. This is not the general impression that the country has of your attitude.

Senior Working Committee members were carrying on a vilification campaign against me and some others who were supporting me, ignoring the Unity resolution. You did not choose to take any action to stop this. On the other hand, you gave the impression of collaborating with them,. It will be easy to see from the press, which persons have violated the Unity resolution. Neither I nor any other responsible person has said a word against any individual.

Your letter to the UPCC and Madhya Pradesh Congress Committees, again taking what is obviously illegal action against Mr. Kamlapati Tripathi, Mr.R.Venkataratnam and Mr. A.P. Sharma, strengthened our apprehensions in regard to your attitude to those whom you consider as my supporters. Only the previous evening we had all met in a meeting of the Parliamentary Board. You did not mention these matters.

We got the news of your action late in the evening, when you and the other office bearers had gone to bed and I was leaving for Lacadives early next morning. It was only after careful consideration of these actions that I and other colleagues in the Working Committee decided to write to you on the 8 September.

However, you have made a grievance of this whereas the aggrieved parties who had been hurt by your illegal acts were others. Your statement that the letter was published in the press before it reached you is not correct.

Then again you have complained that Working Committee members have been carrying on a campaign of vilification against the Congress President and have taken the initiative in demanding an AICC Session. This is a gross misrepresentation of facts. I have not come across any campaign, much less a vilification campaign against you by any Working Committee member.

The Constitution of the Congress provides for the requisitioning of an AICC meeting for a specific purpose and here the requisition was being made to hold the election of the President when his normal term expires in December. I do not see anything wrong in this move, particularly when a majority of the AICC members feel that it would be in the interest of the organization to hold the election at the end of the normal term. It is open to you, if you so desire, to contest the election and get elected in the usual course.

But it is unfortunate that you should have chosen to cast aspersions on a large number of members of the organization of which you are the head and allege that the solidarity, loyalty and respect to the organization are being impaired. It seems to me that you have raised the various matters in your letter in order to cloud the issues that have been raised by the members, who have exercised their undoubted democratic right of asking for a meeting of the AICC.

The role of the party organization and the governmental wing was clearly indicated in the Unity resolution. I have never claimed absolute powers to the Government or for myself, as Prime

Minister, ignoring the party altogether. On the other hand, I feel strongly that the organization and the Government have to function in a complementary manner in the interest of the party and the country. Governmental action alone cannot bring about the wide ranging social and economic changes in India that are vitally necessary and urgent.

The work of the organization does not end with the laying down of broad policies. Even more important is its responsibility to rally the people in their millions in support of accepted policies. It is precisely because the Government is the Congress Party Government and can only rule effectively if the party is active among the people, that we are disturbed that there has not been the vitally needed organzational support that the present situation demands.

Very many issues and crimes have arisen in the country which could have been more easily dealt with if only the organization had been alive and active among the people in support of governmental policies and practices. One may pertinently put the question : What did the organization and in particular, the Central party leadership do when communal riots broke out in Ahmedabad, in the flare up in Andhra on the Telangana issue, the explosive situation in Punjab and Haryana regarding the future of Chandigarh and when the agitation was started in Assam for the establishment of a second refinery.

These are some instances where a organization could have played an effective role in mobilizing public opinion in the right direction.

You have made yet another grievance that I have spoken against the "Syndicate" as a reactionary coterie in the party. I do not think I have ever mentioned the word "Syndicate" in any of my speeches or statements- nor have I characterised anybody in the

Congress organization as "reactionary". I have spoken up against vested interests and some of the allegations that were being made against me and our policies in the press.

However, one cannot fail to note Mr.S.K.Patil's public utterances about many of the accepted policies of the Congress like Bank Nationalization and the abolition of privy purse, etc., Unfortunately your own presidential speech in the Faridabad Session was a condemnation of many of the policies, for which our organization has all along stood. Many remarked that your Faridabad speech was worthy of a Swatantra leader. We cannot completely ignore these tendencies in the Congress organization.

I have never claimed Bank Nationalization as my own programme. On the contrary time and again I have emphasised that I was carrying out only the old programme of the Congress Party. I think it is necessary however to clear the false allegation that I had opposed Bank Nationalization. You are well aware that Mr. Morarji Desai was strongly against this proposal. Mr. Desai had even threatened to resign if such a measure was insisted upon.

It was this strong pressure that prevented me from implementing a measure which I always felt was vitally necessary for our contry's progress and finally after Bangalore AICC Session, I decided to relieve Mr. Desai of the Finance portfolio, only so as to put through this measure.

Your remarks about my promoting the cult of personality around myself are so unfounded that I must describe them as saddening rather than hurtful. As you are aware, the precise relationship between Government and the party organisation is a complex question that has often come up for debate not only in our country, but in other countries of the democratic type.

Certain fundamental principles must govern this relationship, and we have to find a practical working formulation of these principles suitable to the concrete circumstances of our country today. That is what I have been trying to do.

You have charged me with developing a group mentality. Many persons who are even critical in a hostile way against me have been put on important committees, boards, etc. But to delegations where the Government point of view has to be put forward, we cannot afford to include persons who do not wholeheartedly subscribe to all our policies.

If there is any lapse by any person, the competent authority will certainly deal with it according to the law and rules. I have never intervened in favour of anybody who has committed any breach of any law or regulation.'

Mention has been made about the collection of funds on behalf of the party without being accounted for. In this connection it would be interesting to note what has been happening in some of the States. Has any account been rendered by any of the Working Committee members of the funds collected for general and by-elections?

Mr. S.K. Patil openly admitted that he had collected a large sum of money at the time of 1967 elections. Has this been accounted for ? Did this money find its way to the AICC ?I have no objection in your initiating any action against individuals who have misbehaved in the collection of money, but let it be done in an impartial manner without fear or favour.

You have expressed fears about the emergence of one-man rule in the organisation and Government. It is not possible for Government to function unless the head of the

Government has full authority. There are, however, built-in safegurards in the Constitution and there is the ever watchful eye of Parliament to curb any of these unwholesome tendencies.

But I am afraid, the same cannot be said of our organisation. Where is democratic functioning when there is bogus membership, sham elections, bossism etc., rampant in the organisation, when the President himself can arbitrarily act to remove members of the Working Committee in the teeth of the Constitution of the Congress ?

There are innumerable instances where good and honest partymen were thrown out unceremoniously just because they were not prepared to toe the line of the local boss. This state of affairs must end. But how many are seriously worried about these defects and deficiencies ? In contrast many utilise and thrive on these to maintain their position in the party.

I want to assure you and the party in all sincerity, that I do not seek any personal gain or advantage. I want the Congress Party to be strong and united, committed to the principles of democracy, secularism and socialism. Let us weed out the forces which are against these accepted ideals and policies. Let us evolve methods for the healthy functioning of the organisation.

It is from this point of view that the majority of members of the AICC have come forward to ask for a special meeting of the AICC. The duty of the organisational head was to respond to this request of the party members. He has no special responsibility or duty apart from the organisation whose will is represented by the supreme body in the organisation, the AICC. Whoever sets at naught the

aspirations and will of the organisation cannot claim to be a democrat, much less claim to safeguard the integrity of the party or the democratic functioning of the party.

But all these matters that I have dealt with above can only be understood in the background of the fundamental reason for the present situation. The crisis facing the Congress organization reflected in its essence, the deep crisis facing our country. The difficult problems of development have thrown up new challenges to our people. It was the Faridabad AICC Session that showed the widely different responses to this new challenge, in your speech as President on the one hand and the programme adopted by the AICC on the other.

The discussions at the Bangalore AICC Session further sharpened these differences. My note attempted to put forward positive and radical solutions to these problems as the only way to meet the new challenges facing India- in contrast was the content of the speech of Mr. Morarji Desai, which, while purporting to propose the resolutions based on his note, in fact subverted its entire approach.

In this background it was inevitable when, with the nationalization of the banks, the Government was determined to implement the accepted policies, the conflict inside the Congress has deepened.

The question is asked : Why should not the political leadership of the Government push forward with the implementation of the Bangaloe AICC resolution and Ten-point programme ignoring the hostility of the present leadership to the organization for after all those in charge of the organization cannot possibly impede this. But the truth is that the implementation of such a radical programme cannot be done by the Government alone.

In fact what is necessary is a dynamic leadership inside the Government, taking clear - cut decisions on the one hand, and outside among the people an organizational leadership that moves with clarity and inspiration to mobilise the entire people behind this new programme for Indian regeneration, in defence of secularism and for national integration and unity. It is this double need that really had led to the crisis facing our organization. Nobody can deny that in several parts of our country our organization has in fact become defunct. It does not react to new problems, observing the direction in which the people are moving, nor is it able to mobilize support for the decisions of the Government which are obviously the only correct solutions to the difficult problems facing us.

The present tense situation should not be prolonged and the only democratic solution is to take the matter to the AICC as urgently as possible. Therefore, instead of standing on technicalities and complaining that the AICC meeting has been called in defiance of the Constitution, I appeal to you to preside over that meeting and provide the earliest opportunity for members to express their view and abide by the democratic decision of the party. Let the party be the sole arbiter, regardless of personalities, as to what is in the best interest of the party and the country.

I conclude with a request that if you feel that the AICC should be properly convened by a requisition sent by you, then you might call the meeting to be held in Delhi on 22 and 23 of this month.

Since you have released your letters to the press, I am also doing so.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely
Sd/- Indira Gandhi

**(Letter from the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi, to the Congress President, Shri S. Nijalingappa, Dated November 4, 1969)**

Dear Shri Nijalingappa,

I was astonished to receive your letter of the 2nd instant calling upon me to explain my association with the move to convene, what you call, an illegal and unconstitutional meeting of AICC in violation of the party's Constitution and the resolution of the Working Committee. In my letter of yesterday's date written in answer to yours of the 28th of October last, I have dealt with the genesis and nature of the crisis through which our party has been passing in recent times. Instead of repeating what I have already stressed there I should like to emphasise that we are not dealing with a mere technical or legal problem. What we are facing today is essentially a political crisis. Fruitless quibbling on the interpretation of one clause or another of our party Constitution is hardly a proper approach. It has to be frankly recognised that there is a sharp cleavage in our approach to the economic and social problems which confront the country today.

There is no doubt that our people and the vast majority of the rank and file of our organisation solidly support the steps I have recently taken. The Congress Party, as a democratic organisation, must necessarily reflect and respond to the massive urge of our people and party members. I cannot decline to discharge the responsibilities as the leader of the CPP which are expected of me at this juncture. I have no doubt that the vast majority of the members of the AICC and the delegates support these policies and programmes which I have been advocating. The only forum to test this, if it is so desired, is to take the matter to the AICC or the plenary session of the Congress and to have a democratic decision.

It is now a matter of public knowledge that more than 400 members of the AICC sent a requisition to you under Article 12(B) (D) of our Constitution requesting the Working Committee to convene a meetingof the AICC in order to consider the resolution specified in the requisition notice. The requisition as proposed by a large majority of AICC members clearly demonstrates their complete faith in our approach to national problems. It was little expected that the democratic and the constitutional right of the AICC members to have a requisition meeting would be set at naught by you and your supporters in the Working Committee on absolutely untenable, flimsy and tactical ground.

May I then humbly ask who has violated the Constitution of our party? Is it those who have addressed a constitutional requisition to you or is it you and your supporters who have flagrantly violated the obligation to call the requisitioned meeting in accordance with Article 12(B) (D) which contains the following mandatory provision:

"The AICC shall meet as often as required by the Working Committee or on a joint requisition addressed to the Working Committee by not less than 20 per cent of the total number of AICC members having full voting right. Such requisition shall specify the purpose for which the requisitionists desire a meeting of the AICC. A requisitioned meeting shall be held within two months of the receipt of the requisition provided that not more than one requisition can be moved in one year. At any requisitioned meeting, additional items of business may be brought up by the Working Committee for consideration."

It does not require much legal knowledge to appreciate that the article leaves no discretion with anyone to decline to call the requisitioned meeting.

When more than 50 per cent of the members of the AICC desired a meeting, was there any justification to frustrate the move ? You have alleged that the resolution amounted to a censure on you. If you consider it so, it would be all the more necessary and proper for you,-as the head of a democratic political party, to call the meeting to ascertain the opinion of the members. I think it would be a distortion to describe the resolution as a motion of censure against you. It was not possible for me or anyone else who has concern for the democratic way in which our party and its leader must function, to sit as silent spectators when the basic rights of our members to meet and assemble and express their views were being stifled.

I would have failed in my duty had I remained mute and not reacted in the manner in which I and many of our colleagues have done, and for which I have no doubt that we have the overwhelming support of our party and the people. It is unfortunate if not hypocritical, for you to charge me with serious breach of party discipline and with having flouted the Constitution. By curious logic, you have also characterised the convening of the requisitioned meeting as illegal, unconstitutional and as amounting to a violation of the party's Constitution and the resolution of the Working Committee.

I strongly repudiate your charge and state, on the contrary, that you and your supporters in the Working Committee, have flagrantly violated our party Constitution and acted illegally in rejecting the valid demand for a meeting of the AICC. You have also wrongfully and illegally purported to remove three valued members of the Working Committee, to achieve this illegal purpose. It is necessary to caution that no Working Committee meeting would be valid if they are wrongfully excluded therefrom.

I do not think I owe any explanation for what I have done as we have done nothing which is not legal or proper. On the contrary, it is those who have violated our party Constitution and its democratic principles in stifling the voice of the members of the AICC and have thus created a crisis in the party and the country, who owe an explanation. Your demand for an explanation from me confirms the general belief that you and your supporters are bent upon even at the risk of splitting the party, ousting those who do not see eye to eye with you even though they may represent the majority view in the party. If your intention was to frighten those who differ from you,from expressing their points of view freely, you will be disappointed.

While concluding, may I request you again to ponder and review the steps you have been taking. As the head of our organisation , you have a great responsibility and I appeal to you in all sincerity to see whether it is not still possible to seek an early verdict of our party and to abide by it.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/- Indira Gandhi

**(Letter from the Congress President, Shri S. Nijalingappa to the Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi dated November 11, 1969)**

My dear Indiraji,

Your letter of the 3rd November, in reply to mine of the 28th of October, reached me a few hours after I came to know of its contents from the news bulletin of the All India Radio. I would

have written to you immediately. But I was hoping that the efforts that some of our colleagues were making would give us an opportunity to discuss the views and apprehensions that I had conveyed to you in my letter of the 28th. I was sorry that even when we met for lunch you did not consider it necessary to deal with these basic questions that I had raised in my letters to you. I have therefore no option but to write to you again.

I read your letter with all the care and attention that it deserves. I read it in the hope that I would be able to detect some trace of remorse for the sad plight to which intrigues and indiscipline have reduced the party, a ray of hope that you would retrace your steps from the brink to which you had led yourself. But your letter convinced me that I had hoped in vain. Instead of trying to remove the apprehensions that many of us entertain about your attitudes and actions, you have chosen to evade the basic issues that I have raised and juggle with half truths and untruths in the hope that a repetition of an untruth would eventually help to blur the distinction between fact and fiction.

You have accused me of appealing for unity and yet taking action that "displays disregard for the unity of the organisation" You have chosen to describe my action against Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, Shri Subramaniam, and Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma as a patent illegality. You know full well that I did not remove Shri Subramaniam from the Working Committee. Shri Subramaniam removed himself from the Presidentship of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, and thereby forfeited his ex-officio membership of the AICC and therefore his eligibility to continue as an elected member of the Working Committee. All that I did was to point out this constitutional position. You know full well that I did not remove Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma before the meeting of the Working Committee on the 1st of November. He could very

well have attended the meeting of the Working Committee on that day. He chose to stay away. He must certainly have been aware that his action constituted a breach of faith and discipline which disentitled him to continue as the General Secretary. Please permit me to say that it was I who nominated Shri Shankar Dayal Sharma to the Working Committee, and I therefore know that he was nominated to theWorking Committee only to enable him to function as General Secretary. It was therefore clear that the question of his continuing as a member of the Committee did not arise when he had ceased to be the General Secretary. You have described my action in removing Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed from the Working Committee as extra-ordinary and illegal. I would ask you to consider whether his conduct as a member of the Working Committee has not been extra-ordinary and illegal. Can you recall one instance in the long history of the Indian National Congress of a member of the Working Committee persisting in such gross indiscipline and carrying on public propaganda against the head of the organization as Shri Ahmed did in the press conference that he held a few days before the meeting of the Working Committee on the 1st of November? Extraordinary acts of indiscipline and treachery to the organization attract extraordinary penalties.

You have referred to what you call my "obviously illegal action" against Shri Kamalapati Tripathi, ShriVenkataratnam and Shri A.P. Sharma, and implied that I contemplated action against them because they were your supporters. Are you not aware of the resolutions of the Congress that lay down that no Minister can continue to function as a President or Secretary of the PCC ? Do you suggest that this resolution was adopted in recent times to be used against you or your supporters ? In fact,you yourself have referred to this resolution , in your letter of October the 8th as a resolution that was adopted decades ago. I am sure you will recall

that there have been many occasions in the past when the AICC wrote similar letters to PCC Presidents who had become Ministers.

I must also point out that I cannot recall any action that we took in the case of Shri A.P. Sharma. How could you then come to the conclusion that I had taken illegal action against Shri Kamplapati Tripathi, Shri Venkataratnam and Shri A.P. Sharma ? Was it upholding and applying the resolutions of the Congress that constituted illegal action in your eyes ?

You say that you have not violated the Unity Resolution, and neither you nor any "responsible person" has said a word against any individual. I do not want to lengthen this letter by quoting from the various speeches and statements that you, Shri Jagjivan Ram and Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed have made. But I would only draw your attention to Shri Jagjivan Ram's statement in Patna on the 29th of August, four days after the Unity resolution was adopted; your statements about unity and the leadership of the Congress organisation in Bombay; and Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed's press conference in Delhi to which I have already referred.

You have chosen to evade the questions that I raised in relation to your role at the time of the Presidential election by saying that "it is purposeless to traverse all that ground over again". I am afraid you have chosen to evade this issue because you yourself are aware that the facts of the case are too well known and too clear to be contradicted. I must however refer to your contradiction of my statement that you asked me to postpone discussions on the choice of the Congress candidate for the Presidentship when I spoke to you in May, June and July. I am afraid your memory is failing you. I would like to remind you that I did discuss this question with you in May, June and early July. You postponed the discussion every time, and gave us an inkling of what you had in

mind only two hours before the meeting of the Parliamentary Board in Bangalore. It appears to me most extraordinary that you should have spoken to opposition parties and tried to evolve a consensus without first taking your own Party into confidence and looking for a consensus in your own Party. You have stated that you have not worked for the success of Shri Giri. I do not know how this statement passed muster with your conscience.

You have said that the Working Committee's action in disallowing the requisition was unconstitutional and undemocratic. You are well aware of the reasons for which the requisition was ruled out by the Working Committee. The Working Committee would never have stood in the way of a requisitioned meeting of the AICC if it was to consider a matter which was within the constitutional competence of the AICC. You know very well that the form in which the resolution of the requisitionists was couched made the resolution a vote of no-confidence on the President. You know too that the President of the Congress is elected by the delegates to the plenary session and not by the members of the AICC. It should therefore be clear to you as well as to everyone else that only a body constitutionally competent to consider a vote of no -confidence on the President is the delegates' session. How could the Working Committee then permit an effort which would have let the AICC unconstitutionally usurp the right of the plenary session of the Congress ? You have said that the majority of the members of the All India Congress Committee had signed the requisition and therefore the Working Committee had to accept the requisition. Am I to understand that you are unaware of the methods that have been employed to secure signatures from members of the AICC ? Are you not aware that some signatures have been forged, and many have been forced to sign for fear of the consequences of flouting the desires of those who have unlimited power and

patronage at their disposal ? Even if the requisite number of members have voluntarily signed a requisition, can a meeting of the AICC appropriate to itself the rights that the Constitution reserves to the plenary session ?

You have accused the organization of passivity and inactivity. You have asked me what the Central leadership of the organization was doing at the time of riots in Ahmedabad, the refinery agitation in Assam, the agitation in Chandigarh and theTelangana agitation in Andhra Pradesh. Has it occurred to you that many of these agitations have been occasioned by the vacillation and masterly inaction that the administration has exhibited under your leadership and your eagerness to seek personal support by rousing expectations in the hope that you can put off the day when contradictory demands would have to be met ? I need not recount what the Congress organization has done in Gujarat under the leadership of Shri Morarji Desai to deal with the situation that arose as a result of the communal disturbances.

You have tried to defend your persistent acts of indiscipline by claiming that it is the result of an ideological cleavage in the Congress. You have referred to my speech at the Faridabad Session, Shri Patil's speeches and Shri Morarjibhai's attitude to Bank Nationalisation to paint a picture of an ideological struggle in which you are holding aloft the banner of progress and socialism. Your insinuation that I spoke against the accepted policies of the Congress in Faridabad is a travesty of truth. I am as much a socialist as any one else in our country. My record in the organization, and as Chief Minister of Mysore bears testimony to my commitment to socialism and the public sector. You seem to think that a socialist can only ask for the expansion of the public sector, and not for efficiency in the public sector. I do not want to deal with your references to Shri Morarji Desai's and Shri Patil's

speeches at Bangalore. Shri Desai has himself made it clear that he had never opposed the nationalisation of banks, as such. In fact he introduced measures for strict social control and agreed to bring in measures for nationalisation if social control was found inadequate. The persistence with which you are attempting to paint your bid for one man rule in the organization and the Government as a conflict between the so called progressive and radical section of the Congress and the so called reactionary section of the Congress cannot mislead any one except the storm troopers. No aspirant for dictatorial powers in the 20th century has omitted to put on the garb of socialism.

You have referred to the collection of funds for the party, and said that Shri Patil has openly admitted that he had collected money without accounting for it. Shri Patil has already answered this allegation of yours, and has said that he had submitted accounts to the organization as well as in the High Court of Bombay. May I ask you whether it is not a fact that you and your close associates have collected large sums of money in the name of the party and for political work ? You are aware that the resolutions of the Congress made it obligatory for a Minister to report all collections even for charitable purposes to the AICC. You know too that the rules of the AICC require that Ministers and Members of Parliament and Legislatures submit a declaration of their assets to the AICC. May I ask you why you have neither submitted accounts for the funds you have collected nor filled your return of assets to the All India Congress Committee ?

You have referred to bogus membership and bossism in the organization. You have yourself been a President of the Indian National Congress. You know that the Congress has been attempting to deal with these problems, and has achieved considerable success in grappling with the problem of bogus membership. But I am not

aware of any action that you initiated when you were the President of the Congress, and had the primary responsibility for the functioning of the organization, to deal with the problems of bogus membership and bossism.

Your answer to my statements on - one man rule and the personality cult is significant. You have only said that the 'accusation' is saddening and not hurtful. It is significant that you have not denied my statment that your actions and attitudes betray your desire to establish one - man's rule. Your say that the Constitution of our Country has provided built-in safeguards against one - man rule. So had the Constitution of the Weimar Republic in Germany. One does not have to look into the distant past for parallels. The history of the 20th century is replete with instances of the tragedy that overtakes democracy when a leader who has risen to power on the crest of a popular wave or with the support of a democratic organization becomes a victim of political Narcissism and is egged on by a coterie of unscrupulous sycophants who use corruption and terror to silence opposition and attempt to make public opinion an echo of authority. The Congress as an organization dedicated to democracy and socialism has to combat such trends.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
S. Nijalingappa

# 3. Nijalingappa's Presidential Address at the Seventyfirst Session of the Indian National Congress

Delivered by Shri S.Nijalingappa at the Seventy-first Session of the Indian National Congress held at Lal Bahadur Nagar, Hyderabad, in January, 1968.

**Fellow delegates and co-workers,**

Let me preface my address by congratulating the Reception Committee of this Plenary Session who have made it possible to hold it within a very short time. As you know, it was to be held at Sangli in Maharashtra. But the devastating earthquake in the area on 11.12.1967 causing loss of life and property made it impossible to hold the Session in that place. Let us offer our condolences to the bereaved families and extend our sympathy to those who have suffered otherwise.

The Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee under the able leadership of the President of the P.C.C. and the Chief Minister have risen to the occasion and made splendid arrangements within the course of only three weeks to hold this Session in this historic city of Hyderabad, an invigorating confluence of diverse cultural currents. Let us warmly offer our thanks to them.

You have called upon me to carry the heavy burden of the President of the Indian National Congress. Considering the galaxy of great freedom fighters, statesmen, scholars, thinkers and administrators who have filled this office and led the nation, a sense of smallness and humility creeps over me, It is known that I was reluctant to bear the burden of this office not only because of my own shortcomings but also because of the multiplicity of complex problems inherent in the present situation. But pressure from friends with whom I had the privilege of working for two to three decades

have made me agree to take up this responsibility. It is this confidence which those friends, and even more, which the entire body of delegates have reposed in me, that have emboldened me to take it up. I am sure having elected me unanimously you will give me unstinted co-operation, guidance and support in the discharge of my onerous responsibilities.

We are meeting at a critical moment in our nation's history. It is also a crucial time for the Congress to which we are proud to belong. It is true that we have achieved a great deal during the twenty years that have elapsed since Independence. Our production has increased, our national income has gone up, many more of our people are literate, educational opportunities have shown a vast expansion, infant and maternal mortality has fallen, the average expectation of life has undergone a significant increase, our agriculture is gradually getting modernised, our industrial structure is getting diversified, and our armed forces stand guard over our frontiers with increasing confidence, efficiency and equipment and yet all is not well within the country. There is more dissatisfaction today than when we were much worse off. The Congress itself has suffered in the process and the last general elections have given us cause for enquiry and introspection. It is necessary that we should again review the state of the country, see where we have gone wrong, and devise measures for restoring confidence among the people, going forward with confidence in our battle against poverty, unemployment, disease and illiteracy, and giving our people the full and free life that they have a right to expect after the achievement of Independence.

During the last twenty years the Congress has been in office, both at the Centre and in the States, and this has certainly enabled the country to go forward and achieve a significant measure of economic and social progress. The great mass of the people

supported us in the first three general elections, not only because of the work we were doing and the esteem in which they held us but also because we were the only organised party worth the name in Indian Politics. Though there were other parties, they were largely off-shoots from the Congress and did not differ fundamentally from the Congress ideology.

But after the fourth general elections, the following picture has emerged, its colour and pattern never constant during the last ten months. In only eight States, was the Congress able to win a majority of seats leading to the formation of Congress Governments. In Rajasthan, the Congress formed a Government by increasing its strength with the defectors from the opposition party. In other States, except in Madras where the D.M.K. gained an absolute majority in the Assembly, what are called 'United Front Governments' were formed with various parties coming together to get a working majority. Later on, the Congress was unseated due to large scale defections in Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and U.P. Floor crossing became a chronic disease. In Haryana no stable and orderly Government was possible and, therefore the Ministry was dismissed and Assembly dissolved with the imposition of President's rule. In the Punjab, the U.F. Ministry resigned due to defections from its ranks and another Ministry, with the backing of the Congress Ministry is in office today. The West Bengal constitutional crisis is well known where U.F. Ministry was dismissed and a new Ministry with the Congress backing was in position.

What has been the experience of the U.F. Governments which came into existence as an alternative to Congress Governments ? These Governments were formed on the basis of combinations of parties purely opportunist without any firm basis of ideology or programme. The federating political units retained their separate

identity and while functioning as coalition Government, each group had an eye on improving its own position in the State often leading to a conflict within the Ministry. The opportunist combinations of political parties, with extreme left and right idéologies, perhaps encouraged individual members also to indulge in the political play of crossing the floor, not on the basis of any principle, but purely for personal gains. This led to the instability of many of the State Governments and they naturally became greatly concerned with their very survival. All these were reflected in administrative ineffectiveness and weaknesses and the first casualty in this process was development resulting in the deterioration of the economic situation.

The one lesson which emerges is that the United Fronts are not rational alternatives to Congress Governments, unless there is a single majority party to form a stable or, at least, a meaningful well-knit coalition of a limited number of political parties with some common ideological background and common programmes.

If the unfortunate situation, which exists today in some of the States, should be duplicated elsewhere as some people wish, the country may reach a point of no return and the very democratic structure and integrity of the country may be endangered.

This is not a complete picture of the existing situation. A dangerous but otherwise amusing attitude apart from its merits, is being seriously fostered, even by some well-meaning individuals, that anti- Congress attitudes are necessarily democratic and pro-Congress attitude is anything but democratic. When Congressmen defected from the Congress party, it was applauded and the defectors were proclaimed as saviours of democracy and often rewarded with offices of Chief-Ministership and ministerial posts. On the other hand, whenever there were defections from the non-

Congress parties or from United Front groups, they were characterised as undemocratic, anti-national and immoral and on many occasions these defectors were threatened with violence. This attitude has led to the present situation in West Bengal today, where constitutional issues are being attempted to be decided in the streets, with organised mass violence. In Bengal, the Legislative Assembly is put out of the picture by a strange ruling given by the Speaker regarding the legality of the present Ministry and the people are being instigated to take to large-scale so called civil disobedience movement, but in effect, to resort to armed insurrection. The seriousness of the situation can well be imagined if one takes into account the fact that the Left Communist party has taken hold of the situation. Reference is not purposely being made to the functioning of United Front Ministry, where law and order was at a discount and the famous gherao movement was initiated as a normal method of solving labour - management disputes, and these were being extended to other areas of disputes also.

These challenges on the political front have to receive our most earnest consideration. Law and order has to be maintained at any cost. It is unfortunate that even now attempts are made to encourage lawlessness and violence. This is a most dangerous trend from all points of view and if I may say so, it is dangerous even for the political parties which now seem to be encouraging it. Law and order forms an essential fabric of society. Once disrespect for law is permitted deliberately, and violence is preached and resorted to as the only way out for our problems, both real and imaginary, then the foundations of society get disturbed, democracy and even national survival gets endangered and we may lose all that we have gained by our struggle for Independence. I would appeal to all political parties, therefore, to eschew violence from their thought and action, cease disrupting the foundations of our

free and sovereign nation. By all means, there can be political differences, and I do not grudge non-Congress parties emerging victorious in democratic elections. But let party conflicts be governed by rules of the game. And this means ruling out violence, hatred, preaching of treason and disrupting the work of economic machinery of the country. The country will not tolerate such anti-democratic and anti - national activities. All possible steps will be taken to counter and curb them and organisations indulging in such conduct may even have to be banned if it becomes necessary to do so to protect the nation's integrity and survival.

It has to be realised that economic progress and political stability are the twin prime necessities of India today. While these are certainly interdependent, it is possible to conceive of a situation where there is political stability without economic progress; but it is well-nigh impossible to have economic progress without political stability. It is in this context that we have to review and assess the post-general elections developments.

The Official Language of the Union has always presented a difficult and complex problem. It was after a good deal of discussion and consideration, the late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru evolved a consensus in the matter and gave a categorical assurance to the non-Hindi people that they would not be put under a handicap in adopting Hindi as the official language. Bi-lingualism for Union Administration and as a necessary corollary three-language formula in the field of education formed the basis of the solution. We should be happy that a statutory backing has been given to the Nehru's assurance by the passing of the Official Language (Amendment) Bill in the recent Session of Parliament. Certain controversies have arisen with regard to certain amendments to the resolution which has been passed along with the Bill. This is a matter over which there could be further discussion and I am

prepared to take up the question with the Central Government. If there are certain difficulties encountered in the actual implementation, they could be discussed at the appropriate stages and suitable remedies found. I would therefore, appeal to all non-Hindi people to give up the agitational attitude and create an atmosphere in which we may be able to iron out differences and find a solution in due course that should be acceptable to all concerned. I have a special appeal for the Hindi-people. Hindi has been accepted as the official language of the Union in the Constitution. And even those who oppose Hindi, do so only on the basis that there should be a transitional period of biligualism, may be a prolonged one, so that non-Hindi people may not be put to any disadvantage or discrimination. It is for the Hindi -people, whose language others are called upon to accept, to make concessions and provide all the safeguards needed for removing all suspicions and doubts from the minds of the non-Hindi people. Unfortunately this language controversy is being exploited today for ulterior purposes, endangering, in the process, the very integrity of the country, which is of paramount importance to every patriotic Indian. The country has much more serious problems to solve and all citizens should devote themselves to the solution of those problems instead of wasting their energies in agitations resulting often in extreme violence, as is currently the case both in the North and South. I would appeal again in all earnestness and humility that we put a stop to these activities which go very much counter to our efforts to bring about better integration and unity.

There are also small differences existing between States regarding border adjustments. It is true that Congress adopted the policy of having linguistic States long ago even when in 1921 under the guidance of Gandhiji. Congress Provinces like Karnataka Provincial Congress Committee and Andhra Provincial Congress

Committee were constituted for the better and effective organisation of the Congress. Even before that some States were formed in the North on language basis, such as Sind and Orissa. But it was only in 1956 that the entire country was finally divided into linguistic States. There is no doubt that on the whole this has made for more effective democratic functioning and mass involvement in the States and helped to promote their economic development. But there are still some pockets of agitation regarding adjustment of borders in two or three States. While there is necessity to finalise the adjustment of these borders, it should be realised that we should not try to make political or party capital out of it. In fact, there should be a broad and generous approach to this problem, as it is well-nigh impossible to draw a completely logical dividing line in view of the fact that along the borders both the adjacent languages are spoken and understood. There are similar disagreements regarding the sharing of the waters of some rivers. I am definitely of the view that these comparatively minor differences could be ironed out by discussions and good will and they do not merit agitations or violence or the threat of violence which could become self-defeating because of their double-edged character.

The country has passed through a period of crisis during the last five years. Starting with the Chinese aggression, followed by Pakistani conflict and serious drought situation during two successive years, the economy of the nation had become critical in many aspects. There has been a rise in prices, particularly of food and other essential commodities due to failure of agricultural production; and super-imposed on this inflationary trend was the recession in the economy affecting a large part of the industrial structure, consumer and producer goods and engineering industries. Fortunately, there has been a healthy change in this trend because of the better production in agriculture. We are expecting a record

production of about 95 million tons of foodgrains with corresponding increase in the production of fibres and oil-seeds. This has been made possible not merely by favourable weather conditions, but also to a great extent due to the new strategy in agriculture. The new high-yielding varieties of wheat, paddy, maize, jowar, bajra and other millets with the application of artificial fertilisers backed by plant protection measures point out to a possible breakthrough in agricultural production. This new strategy has also brought about favourable production changes in cotton, jute and oil-seeds. If pursued with vision and determination, there is no doubt that this will bring in agriculture the much-needed breakthrough, leading not only to self-sufficiency in foodgrains but also to increase in the production of industrial raw materials and other commodities which are necessary to improve our exports. These would provide the new jumping base for our economy as a whole. More measures should be afoot to take advantage of the better agricultural production to give a new push to the economy of the country generally.

I am enthused by another aspect of this better performance in the agricultural front-the new prospect it holds to the toiling millions of our people in the rural areas. While farm increases would lead to a new prosperity to the farming population, it would also open up new areas of development in rural India. There will have to be new processing units, storage capacity, transportation facilities etc. on the basis of which a large number of agro-industries could develop. These will have to be properly organised and a new generation with devotion and zeal should arise to provide the leadership in creating a new rural India.

But certain basic things are necessary in order that this may be achieved. While fertilisers, good seeds including hybrid seeds, insecticides, co-operative storage and distribution are being

encouraged and becoming part of agriculture, two things must receive high priority. One is the availability of credit at a comparatively low rate of interest. Though there is considerable improvement in the matter of providing the agriculturist with necessary credit through co-operatives and co-operative banking etc., very much more has to be done and a time should come and soon, when the agriculturist will find all the credit he requires, easily, quickly, in time, and as near his village as possible. Further, agriculture should be accepted as an industry and should be treated as such for purposes of credit. The agriculturist is an honest man and the creditor can depend on him. It is found that most of the financial help that is given by the banks - public or private - is in the urban areas and comparatively very little in the rural areas. This should be changed and more credit should flow to the rural areas so that agriculture as an industry should have the fullest possible encouragement through credit. I am glad that there is a growing awareness of this necessity both by the Government and the banks. Banks, both in the public and private sectors, are not as enthusiastic to invest in the rural areas as in the bigger industries in the urban parts and the sooner it is changed the better. The Finance Ministry in the Centre seems to be now insisting on the banks serving this important social and economic need. I am sure, the banks in both sectors are realising the need to change their approach and outlook. Otherwise the Government will have to take the desired steps to bring it about by the means available to them. It is also evident that the rural areas, in view of better prices for agricultural commodities, are able to invest in banking institutions, co-operative or others. This should be carefully studied and all possible steps taken to encourage this investment by the rural areas.

As important, if not more, is the imperative and vital need of increasing the area under irrigation. Agriculture is a gamble in our

country due to the vagaries of the monsoon. It does not help us much if we go on complaining against the monsoon and often take shelter under its undependability. We have to take steps to conserve every drop of rain water and thereby bring more and more land under irrigation. Necessary steps by way of irrigation wells, contour bunding, afforestation, minor irrigation by tanks etc. are called for. But these only solve a part of the problem. In order that we meet the problem arising out of failure of monsoon recurring quite often, medium and major irrigation projects are equally a must. Not only do they serve direct irrigation, they also serve as standby during periods of scarcity.

Our mighty rivers are there to be harnessed for this purpose. I am told that not more than ten percent of their water is exploited. If we could have diverted our attention to this mighty problem of irrigation, we would not have had the sorry spectacle of going about begging for food, the basic necessity of man.

Even now, instead of the States being asked to find substantial resources for implementing these medium and big schemes, the Planning Commission and Central Government should divert their attention to this aspect of the problem and undertake construction of these big reservoirs as national projects and find necessary funds. I am inclined to suggest that even deficit financing may be resorted to for bringing these projects into being as irrigation, results in producing twice or thrice as much of food and cash crops as is being produced now.

Also more and more area is being taken away, for housing the growing population in villages, towns and cities. Roads, tanks and industries too take away considerable areas, the result being that the area under agriculture cannot expand. It is agreed on all hands that area under forest in India should increase and if we bring it

down we do so at our peril. Further, forests yield raw materials for a plethora of industries. Thus limited, we can only survive and be self-sufficient in food and other agricultural raw materials if we can produce at least twice as much as we are doing now in the area under agriculture. That can only be by increasing the area under irrigation. Irrigation creates scope for greater employment. Where one man is needed for cultivating an area, more than three are needed, for cultivating the same area under irrigation. For these and other reasons I am stressing, the need for giving highest priority to irrigation.

Apart from utilising rain water as above stated, there is underground water which is untapped in certain areas of our country. I am not aware of any attempt made to estimate its availability and exploitation. This has to be undertaken in a big way to increase again areas under irrigation.

One important and basic matter about agriculture which I would like to refer to is that the Land Reforms have not been fully implemented in any of the States. This is unsatisfactory. I urge that within a year from now all the State Governments may satisfy the demand that the tiller should be the owner. We have to take note of our experiences during the last several years in this attempt and take decisions on the strength of that experience and even make changes in the laws for their implementation.

Big and centralised industries are being established in several parts of the country. More have to be established. But I do not like the craze for gigantism that appears to be prevalent in some quarters. We cannot have one or two gigantic units supplying all the requirements of the vast country in the name of economies of scale. On the contrary, serious attempts should be made to prevent their concentration in a few places and to see they are distributed more

evenly, regard being had to availability of raw material, water, power, and transport and local labour. Of course, nearness of market also is an important factor, but not the main factor.

In the factories whether private or public one finds considerable unrest among the labour population and often violence is resorted to by them. We are certainly in favour of labour having a fair deal at the hand of the employer and of their having better living standards. But more often than not they seem to be led away by a mischievous and unpatriotic leadership which is interested in creating chaos in the country and bringing about disruption of society. It is high time that a review is undertaken of the many industrial disputes of recent years and the part played by such mischievous and unpatriotic influences in fostering and leading them. Labour has a right to improve its condition, but it has also the duty to make this possible by increasing production and productivity.

Small-scale and cottage industries have an equally and even a large part to play in building up the economy of our country. Agriculture alone, though it is the biggest industry, cannot give adequate employment. If mechanisation in agriculture becomes more popular as can be expected, its capacity for rural man-power employment becomes more limited. Sophisticated modern big industries may not be able to employ more people. In a country like ours where millions and millions of people are either wholly unemployed or partly employed, small - scale industries and cottage industries have a very important place. Banks and financing institutions have to come to their aid. What has been said of agriculture applies mutatis mutandis to small-scale and cottage industries. Gandhiji, who knew his country more than anybody else, therefore, insisted on the highest attention being given to small-scale and cottage industries.

While he taught us to encourage the building up of the economy by every truthful and non-violent means as he did for achieving Independence, he did more than anybody to bring about a social order in which there should be equality among men without any regard to caste or religion. Therefore, he was willing to give up his precious life for the emancipation of the Harijans and other depressed classes. What has been done for them may be impressive. Laws against untouchability have been passed. But we have to adopt more massive and effective measures to accelerate the process of bringing up and improving the living conditions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and wipe out such of their disabilities as are still lingering on especially in the rural areas. This, I believe, can be done by enabling them to live amidst us in the villages and small towns by seeing to it that when new extensions are formed and laid out, sites are allotted for them not in one reserved area but scattered so that they live among other castes and communities without any sense of inferiority and as equals. I also wish that hostels are not reserved for them but Harijan students should be admitted into all hostels, their expenses being met by Government.

These are some of the economic, political and social challenges we have to face from within and we must face them successfully. We have challenges equally trying and serious in regard to our neighbours and the outside world.

We have a sound ancient heritage of maintaining good neighbourliness on our part and nobody in history, can accuse us of aggression. It is in keeping with our policy of co-existence and non-alignment. Pandit Nehru, the finest product of our culture, the keenest student of world politics and one of the greatest statesmen of all times has left valuable lessons for us to follow in this behalf. We have no tradition of encroaching on others and on the contrary, we have been in the past and recent times victims of

perfidy and aggression and we have many a time heroically resisted invasions. A series of explosions of atomic weapons by China has posed an additional threat to peace in the world, and, in particular, to peace in this region and has the effect of further aggravating the international situation. We have to be constantly on the watch to take necessary measures to counteract such activities.

China has further chosen to carry on ceaselessly a virulent cold war against us in particular and against several other nations also. Both India and China are developing countries and there are great mutual advantages in continuous good neighbourliness. Let us hope that China with whom we had intimate cultural relationship for such a long time as some two millennia without any occasion for misunderstanding would soon realise the eventual futility and harm in continuing the unfortunate differences. Both of us have the most ancient and rich civilisation and culture and are reputed for maturity and ancient wisdom and it does not behove either of us to keep up the differences. We have no quarrels with the people of China as such. It is with the autocratic, dictatorial and expansionist leadership of the Communist Party as it is set up in China and which is distorting and twisting communist philosophy for its own selfish ends. We must find a solution based on justice and fair play.

This holds good in respect of Pakistan as well. India and Pakistan are first cousins and the same blood flows in their veins. They should shed suspicion and co-operate sincerely for the mutual benefit of both the peoples. There is also the geographical compulsion for both and a common background from times immemorial. The sooner Pakistan realises that there is no greater folly than malignant hatred, the better it would be for its own prosperity which we also wish with all earnestness and for our own.

Regarding our relationship with other countries, thanks to the great efforts made by the late Prime Minister of revered memory, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, our relationship with them is one of friendliness and understanding. I think the non-alignment policy is mainly responsible for this good relationship and it would be in the interest and progress not only for us but for the world, to maintain them. In this age of developing science and technology when distances are being annihilated, happenings of importance anywhere have their impact throughout the world. No country can afford to be insular in its attitude and outlook. Mutual good-will and friendliness are imperative necessities so that peace and progress may be established in this world of ours. Humanity is at the crossroads and unless vast powers possessed by man over nature are controlled by moral and spiritual approaches, the world may be led either to destruction by insane use of them or to progress, peace and maintenance of human values by their constructive use. It is, therefore, that Vinobaji has expressed his feeling that science and spirituality should go together. It is significant that Panditji often felt drawn towards this desired objective in the last years of his life. I have a growing conviction creeping on me that the angularities of capitalism and communism are slowly and surely being rounded off which will result in their closer understanding and avoidance of opportunities for any conflict.

It is true that many countries specially America, Russia, England, Japan and Germany have been helping us in many ways including financial assistance for building up our industries and other undertakings like power and irrigation projects. We are beholden to them. America deserves special thanks for its providing us with foodgrains during the last few years when unprecedented scarcity prevailed which is still in a smaller measure continuing to worry us. Special thanks are also due to the Soviet Union for the

way in which they are helping us to expand the public sector and build up the basic and heavy industries so essential for economic growth. These countries as others are also helping us with technical know-how.

While we acknowledge this help with gratitude and may even welcome it in future, it is high time that we learn to be self-reliant and not always look to other countries for everything. I am glad it is being realised more and more that we should look within and find technical skill and capacity for research in various fields of industry and science in our young scientists who, if given necessary encouragement, help and opportunity, will certainly deliver the goods. This is necessary.

With our background and love of peace and good-will "Sarve Janah Sukhino Bhavantu" we can also materially contribute towards making this world more peaceful and human society happy in which there is no tension, political or otherwise.

As I have said earlier, we have after the attainment of freedom during the last about 20 years, under the guidance and advice of the Congress, done much for the building up of the economy of the country. Possibly more has been done than what was done during the last 200 years of foreign rule. But the results of these mighty efforts have been more than neutralised by the explosive growth of population. Therefore, a massive widespread scheme of family planning has become imperative. I am glad that more and more of our people have been appreciating its necessity and taking it up. It is significant that this is becoming more popular in the rural areas than in urban areas. Possibly, the low levels of economy in the villages is responsible. Anyway this is a duty cast on all of us irrespective of caste or religion to take it up in earnest and make it popular and widespread.

I have talked so far of some of the factors that have caused dissatisfaction in the country and indicated my thinking on some of the lines on which we should proceed in our policy. Our introspection has to go further. We have to review the entire work done by various Governments and find out why and where we have failed and why there is dissatisfaction among the people; whether our administrative machinery which we have inherited from practically a Police Raj can function effectively in a Government which is essentially a welfare State wedded to democratic socialism; and what changes in procedures and set up are necessary in the light of our twenty years' experience; Whether the administrative machinery is not top heavy and cumbersome; whether there is not too much delay and indifference and how they can be avoided and a better machinery provided. We have also to find out in what ways we can secure more effective and positive involvement of our people in the task of economic development. These are matters which should call for our earnest consideration, and if found necessary, changes should be effected as are found desirable boldly and without hesitation. I hope the Administrative Reforms Commission will give us guidance in this matter; but we also, as an organisation, have to consider these questions and we shall see that we do so.

An even more important question we have to review is the extent to which we have been able to implement the resolutions we adopted at Bhubaneshwar on "Democratic Socialism" based on democracy, dignity of individual and social justice. It takes time to bring about such a radical change in our society but are we at least taking necessary steps in that direction ? Are we moving on the right lines ? Have we succeeded in lessening the disparities between the rich and the poor ? Have we prevented the concentration of economic power or helped to arrest the growth of monopolistic

tendencies in the economy ? We must admit that we have not done much about any of these things. There is even now a lack of clarity about our objectives in terms of implementation and lack of any conspicuously visible criteria in the direction of moving towards the eventual establishment of a democratic socialistic society. This is true not only among many Congressmen but even among members of other parties who swear by socialism. Divergent views are expressed in our ranks, even at high level regarding state trading, nationalisation or socialisation of banks, private and public enterprises in industry etc. I am not surprised as ours is an expanding economy and views may differ. But the aim has to be kept in view that economic levels of the citizens should improve resulting in leading a fuller, richer and better life; in removal of disparities in incomes, prevention of concentration of wealth, in decentralisation of means of production as far as possible and, of power. The Ten-point programme adopted by the All India Congress Committee gives us a programme of action. To implement these political, social and economic objectives, enlightened and informed co-operation of people is essential. It is towards this, that the Congress organisation has to devote itself and rededicate itself. The organisation has also to keep itself in continuous touch with the Congress Governments both at the Centre and in the States, to watch progress and stimulate implementation. I shall after due consideration and consultation indicate what precisely should be the machinery that should be set apart for this purpose.

After Independence while the Congress continues to be the only political party with its roots everywhere in the entire country, its hold on the masses and its influence are slowly going down. We do not evince any interest in constructive activity except at the time of elections to the Central or State legislature or to local bodies and at the time of enrolment of membership and elections to

Congress Committees. This inactivity at other times is due to several causes. The main cause from my point of view is that we are not attracting young men and women to come into the Congress fold. I sometimes experience on the part of the old among us a disinclination to welcome them. Unless we welcome the youth, train them up and tell them of the glorious struggle of India for Independence under one of the greatest men ever born and who trained men of talent, character and patriotism to accept the philosophy of non-violence and truth and of the necessity of means being as good as the ideals and objectives, we will not make any headway. I think we should revive our previous practice of encouraging our district and State political conferences at periodical intervals to reiterate our objectives, review progress in implementation, attract younger men to our fold and give an opportunity to younger leadership to emerge in the open. We have to help our younger colleagues to rediscover Gandhiji by ourselves returning to the path he showed - paths of truth, non-violence and combining profession with practice. We cannot afford to forget Gandhiji's teachings and if we do we shall be endangering our experiment in bringing about social change with peace and, stability.

May I also add that every Congressman should have, at this critical and trying period in the history of the Congress sufficient introspection and ask himself whether he is acting up to the high principles preached by Gandhiji. Whether he is keeping up the required standards of conduct and behaviour wherever he is; and whether his approach to problems are objective and not subjective. I appeal to all Congressmen most earnestly that we maintain high standards.

It is equally our duty to see that any attempt by any party or group of persons indulging in anti-social and anti-democratic and anti-national activities is put down. We also cannot allow petty

considerations of language, caste, and community to adversely affect national integrity and unity of the country. I appeal to one and all to work whole-heartedly and co-operate with us in this task of national regeneration and even national survival.

The question of relationship of State and the Centre and among the States themselves has become a matter of importance in view of some States having different political parties to run the administration. It is just now a zigsaw puzzle which should be settled as early as possible in the manner satisfactory to all concerned, the basic directive factor being the allround development of the country as a whole, maintenance of its solidarity, strength and dignity.

We must not let anti-Centre sentiments to grow or become a subject of political or party exploitation. And for this purpose we must re-examine the State-Centre relations and entrust the States with more power and resources than they have at present so as to fix more responsibility on them and prevent them from using the Centre as a bogey to cover their own faults of omissions and commissions.

The only political party which has, as I said, its roots in all the areas of our country is the Congress. If for any reason, its strength and influence diminishes and it allows itself to be a house divided against itself it will be a bad day for India. There is no other single political party which can bear the burden of carrying on the Government of this country either at the Centre or in most of the States. It is, therefore, an imperative and urgent necessity to set our house in order and remove the cobwebs that might have gathered. Let us cease to speak with divergent voices. Let us, after sufficient deliberations, take decisions and having taken them, implement them with unity and common understanding. This would

need streamlining of the Congress organisation both at the Centre and in the States. The Congress can no longer afford to work in a non-business-like manner. Its secretariat must work with speed and efficiency; it must have a proper research unit; a better public relations machinery; an organised cadre; and more understanding liaison, co-ordination, and co-operation with the Congress Governments in the country. As soon as I have had the time to make the necessary study of this complex problem, I propose to take necessary action on the basis of your advice for re-organising the work of the Congress.

But equally important is the necessity to educate the common citizen as to his duties in the democratic set-up. Let him know what great things have been done and what more remains to be done and what is expected of him. We have to bring home to him what is meant by karma. We have to tell him that karma is not pathetic contentment or conformity with the existing order. We have to tell him karma is a dynamic philosophy of activity and achievement and work towards a fuller and a richer life. We have to tell him his duties in electing his own Government and what it means. We must make him proud of his country, its history, its philosophy, its great cultural heritage and inspire in him a desire for greater glory and for that purpose greater and more purposeful and creative work.

The task before the Indian National Congress is, therefore, to rededicate itself to meet these challenges in the political, social and economic fronts. These are new problems arising out of a changing India. In a stagnant community, the problems continue to be the same and, therefore, no new knowledge, skills or attitudes are necessary. But, progress means change - and change is found to mean confrontation with new and, perhaps, more difficult problems. Surely the Indian National Congress, which played such a historic

role in the pre-and post - Independence era, need not be afraid to play its new role in the context of progress and change. It is my feeling that the Congress organisation should, if necessary, be reshaped and reconstructed for this purpose.

We have to encourage creative thinking and innovation within the Congress. We may have lacked this creative thinking and innovation for sometime. It is here that the younger generation has to play a vital role. This can happen only if we have the capacity to attract the younger generation, particularly, the educated youths into our fold. We will succeed in this task only to the extent we create a better image of our organisation in the minds of the intelligentsia and the intellectuals.

While I appeal to the youth to join the Congress and make it a more purposeful organisation, I think that the organisation itself should have a permanent cadre of workers earnestly devoted to their duties in all the fields of constructive work. The Seva Dal which during the period of the freedom struggle and thereafter was known for its discipline has to be built up and strengthened. The Women's Wing will have to be activised. The Youth Congress which has to infuse into the young a spirit of service has to be better organised. Above all, we want our workers to be constantly in touch with the masses in the rural areas, and in the urban areas. Their duty would be to educate the people as to their duties, responsibilities and also their rights so that they are fully aware of what is going on in the country. Even more, they have to build up the morale of the people to work harder and produce more and more of everything the country needs. All this they can do only if they keep in constant touch with the people and win their confidence by dedicated service as they did during the days of our struggle for Independence.

There are many schemes undertaken by the Congress towards making the life of the common man more meaningful and better. There is another scheme to which I would invite serious consideration; that is, to build better villages and make village life more healthy and beautiful and aesthetic by replacing the present dirty village, that is so full of squalor, insanitation, and ignorance. The Planning Commission, the Central Government and the State Governments may earnestly sit together and evolve a scheme which would in the course of 15 years build new villages with better houses, better sanitation and more scientific layout with all amenities so that villagers can become proud of their villages and not desert them in large numbers to swell slums in our urban areas. A time must come when instead of "brain drain" from the rural to the urban areas there will be flow of talent and skill from the urban to the rural areas because of superior attractions and amenities of the reconstructed villages.

Lastly, so that we may achieve our economic, social and cultural objectives, it is desirable and necessary that there should be better linkup between the States and the Centre. This has become more necessary since all the Governments are not of the one political party. Whatever the party a Government belongs to, I am sure they all agree that there should be full co-operation and co-ordination of effort in building up the economy of the country, in bringing about better living standards for the people and the integrity of the Union is maintained. I am willing to do my humble bit.

There are quite a few who take a gloomy view of things and become prophets of doom, either because they are by nature pessimistic or take delight in doing so or out of wishful thinking. I have no such feeling. The Congress is the only organisation which can take the country on to a brighter future towards greater prosperity and towards unqualified fulfilment of our dreams to

build up a strong, united, healthy, happy India with a future more glorious than the past. Let us stand together for its fulfilment.

Friends, I have expressed myself freely and frankly. Having been a servant and soldier of the Congress during the last three to four decades working in several capacities and at various levels and having had some experience of the administration, I have made myself available for further service. I am to be guided, advised and inspired by you. I hope to have them in abundance.

**JAI HIND.**

# 4. Atulya Ghosh Memorial Lecture by S. Nijalingappa

## IMBALANCES IN INDIAN ECONOMY AND REMEDIES

It is a matter of privilege to me that I am called upon by friends of the Atulya Ghosh Memorial Committee to deliver the first memorial lecture. I am proud and happy it could have been in the fitness of things if I had spoken of this personality, his achievements, his approach to National Problems and his rugged exterior and to commonsense, his fearlessness, more than all his sense of justice and fair play. Atulya Da I affectionately called him. It is true I knew him fairly intimately as a colleague in the Congress Working Committee for nearly twenty years and as a member of my Working Committee when I was President of Indian National Congress, both before and after the notorious split was brought about by indiscipline and other disqualifications of Indira Gandhi and her friends with similar disqualifications. After the split he had written and published the "The Split" which deals with it. I wish everyone who wants to know what happened at the time would read it. It is interesting. I am grateful to Atulya Ghosh and other friends who supported me.

One particular thing about him that struck me and impressed me was his intense love and affection for children. I had my little grand-daughter Sandhya living with me in Delhi. At my request he would often come for breakfast. He would call her "Sandhya" and the child immediately she heard that big voice would rush to him to sit on his bulky lap to be fondled by him. She is still the proud possessor of a present - a lamp

- which he presented to her on her birthday. No wonder he established one of the finest Institutions for Children in this City. His love of flowers specially, roses, was great. He invited me to his village house. Unfortunately I could not go. A fine host as Bengalis usually are.

I did not select as my subject for this first Memorial Lecture to speak about him as friends here know much more about him than I do. It would be carrying coal to New Castle. I have therefore selected a subject which I know would appeal to him namely "Economic Disparities and how to solve them". I am not an economist in the popular sense. The various remedies I have enumerated are the results of my experience, feelings and serious thoughts during these more than fifty years of my political life. That the disparities have been growing and to an observer painfully so after our Independence, during the last forty years is an open book. Economic progress could have been different and better. It is a matter for study and analysis. Even a casual observer as he moves through the big industrial and Metropolitan cities on the one hand and the rural areas and villages on the other will be struck and shocked at the contrast between the life in the two areas.

I would like to quote two statements of Mahatma Gandhi as a beginning. "A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good".

"Let not one try to justify the glaring difference between the classes and the masses, the prince and the pauper, by saying that the former need more. That will be idle sophistry and a travesty of my argument. The contrast between the rich and the poor today is a painful sight. The poor villagers are exploited by the foreign government and also by their own country men the city-dwellers. They produce the food and go hungry. They produce milk and their children have to go without it. It is disgraceful. Every one must have a balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of one's children and adequate medical relief." That constituted his picture of economic equality. He did not want to taboo everything above and beyond the bare necessities, but they must come after the essential needs of the poor are satisfied. First things must come first.

The first statement was made in 1948, and the second in 1946. These statements are very relevant today. His expectations are not fulfilled but exactly the opposite has happened and is growing rapidly in favour of the rich and against the poor of this unfortunate country. Within an year and a half after attainment of freedom Mahatma Gandhi whose inspired leadership led the nation to its achievement and whose economic ideals based on non-violence and decentralization of production, of power, and of wealth, was murdered by a fanatic Hindu.

Thereafter within another two years the one and the only man who materially contributed to the unity and the integrity of the country by his firm, imaginative, skilful and yet kind handling of the complex problem of 560 odd Indian States, passed away due to ill-health. That was Sardar Patel. Both of them knew their India as only the few leaders knew; the rural poverty, ill-health, illiteracy and more than all un-employment of the millions upon millions. They would have acted as healthy

and necessary restraints upon the wrong initiative economic policies and politics that followed which are taking the country down-hill economically, socially and morally. As expected, immediately after freedom we elected members to the Constituent Assembly, which after three years of intense deliberations by the leaders of the highest calibre in all departments and belonging to various parties, brought out a Constitution which is considered to be one of the very best and suited to our culture, history and genius. The Constitution enumerates Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles of State Policy. Here I wish to state that among the Fundamental Rights the Right to Work and the Right to Information had been added.

I would like to quote judicial pronouncements on Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles: "The Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles constitute the 'Conscience' of our Constitution. The purpose of the Fundamental Rights is to create an egalitarian society, to free all citizens from coercion or restriction by society and to make liberty available for all. The purpose of the Directive Principles is to fix certain social and economic goals for immediate attainment by bringing about a non-violent social revolution. Through such a social revolution the Constitution seeks to fulfil the basic needs of the common man and to change the structure of our society. It aims at making the Indian masses free in the positive sense. Without faithfully implementing the Directive Principles, it is not possible to achieve the Welfare State contemplated by the Constitution"

According to me they are the Head and the Heart of the Constitution.

If we consider the history of our economic growth after Independence it becomes clear that the most important basic Directive Principles are not implemented, not respected but completely neglected and treated with indifference if not with contempt.

Instead of directing its attention to the welfare of the masses as directed the Government attracted by the glamour of the industrialized West and in imitation thereof interested themselves in capital intensive heavy industries and gave every possible help and encouragement. Money was found for them not only indigenous, foreign capital was allowed to be freely borrowed along with Machinery and Technical know-how. Though India is accepted to be the nation with the highest technological skill and number of technicians, next only to America and Russia, it is unfortunate that the same has not been properly used and encouraged. Importing of even machines that could be manufactured in India has been largely encouraged. Debts of thousands of crores of rupees have been incurred, the creditors including practically every advanced country, including even smallest. One need not go into details. They are well known. The number of big industrialists is coming up and industrial houses with small capitals a few years before have increased their capital many times. The process is going on. Similarly business houses have been growing. Licences for imports and exports have been on the increase and indiscriminate. Added to this after the split in the Congress in 1969, the administrative machinery, because principles are not respected has become corrupt. The bureaucracy is all powerful. This has resulted in the phenomenal increase of Tax-Evaders, Black-marketeers, Smugglers, Hoarders and other anti-social elements. Today two attributes of National Life are: 1. Power is my God and how to get it and retain it is my religion.

2. Money is my God, how to make it is my religion. Thus corruption has steeped into every aspect of National Life. This has spread wide and at all levels. This section of the population consisting of above enumertaed people and the bureaucratic machineries at all levels except no doubt a few, have been growing rich according to their status and capacity and are growing richer. They constitute about ten percent of the population. Living mostly in the big cities, they lead a life which is comparable with that of the rich countries. One statement possibly depicts the contrast between this rich class and the rural poor. It is said that a lady of this class spends on herself for one day as much as could suffice a poor rural family for a month.

In contrast to this what do we find in the village. The contrast is shocking and the gulf between the two sections is widening day by day. This section of people constitute nearly 65 to 70%. The remaining 20 to 25% are the middle class who could take care of themselves. Not only is there extreme poverty among the 80-90% of the rural population they are without employment and every day that passes accelerates it. They have not sufficient food even. Neither they have sufficient clothing. Most of them live in houses that are open to the whims of the Monsoon, the Wind, the Sun. The most important aspect of Rural Life is illiteracy. One of the Directive Principles of the State Policy was that every child should be compulsorily and freely educated upto fourteen years. If this had been done after we accepted the Constitution, nearly 75% of the population would have been literate. It is nearly forty years since the Constitution was accepted and little and nothing has been done to implement these Directive Principles. This has materially contributed to the ignorance of the masses who cannot follow what is going on whether for them or against them.

First let me deal with Rural India:

The basic factor that controls substantially the economic life, its progress and national developments is Agriculture. It is my firm opinion that it is an industry that has to be properly and scientifically organized. The total land area of the country is about 81 crores of acres. We have to set apart nearly 35% of this area for forest. Of the remaining about 52 to 53 crores of acres about 3 crores are uncultivable waste. What is left is namely 50 crores. Out of this about 7 crores were under irrigation before Independence. Unfortunately, due to the want of due appreciation and necessary sense of its importance on the part of the Governments only about 6 crores of acres are added so that today only about 13 crores of acres are under irrigation. And 40 long years have passed after Independence. Governments loudly protest and profess that they are giving utmost importance to Agriculture and even to Irrigation. But the fact is little or nothing is done. By this time the rest of the area of nearly another 11 to 12 crores could have been brought under irrigation. By tapping all available sources of water, rivers, underground water and lifts, irrigation could have been fully extended. Let me immediately submit that a lakh of acres brought under irrigation, yield per annum would have been an additional income of 40 crores of rupees to the farmer. Just imagine what the National Income could have been. Instead of misdirecting ourselves entirely to Industrialization in a big way we could devote ourselves to this. It is a further fact, the land if brought under irrigation increases the employment potential by ātleast 200%. The cost to bring one acre of land under irrigation is nearly 10 to 15 thousand rupees. If we devote the necessary amount to bring this 11 to 12 crores of acres of land under irrigation it could be done within the next 10 years. On-going big, medium and minor irrigation projects have been going

on, most of them 25 to 30 years. The Rajasthan canal which could have irrigated possibly 10 to 15 lakhs of acres and which was expected to be finished 30 years ago is still under construction and little area is under irrigation. Similarly, during my Chief-Ministership in Karnataka I had laid foundation for Six major and several medium and many minor irrigation projects. All the major and medium projects are still to be completed even though nearly 25 years have passed. There are similar instances possibly in most States. We may calculate the huge losses. They could have been finished within 10 to 15 years. The Central Government seems to be under the impression that the resources for this have to be found by the States and it is their responsibility. This is again completely wrong. Irrigation is the first and the foremost national effort if we seriously think of improving the economics of the country and economic status of vast majority of the rural population of nearly 60 crores. I wish there will be necessary reaction to my suggestion. I may as well point out that under irrigation if you spend 15,000/- rupees an acre you will beget 4,000/- rupees of extra annual income. Agricultural production means nearly 25% return per annum. Is there any industry undertaken either in the Public Sector or in the Private Sector which can give this return on capital I would like to know. Even today the rest of the 12 crores of acres could be irrigated within 10 years. Will it be done?

Next to Irrigation is the life led by the people in the villages. The villages are ecologically un-healthy. Every village big or small even small towns are a source of disgust and contempt in the evenings and specially so in the mornings, when men, women, children of all ages evacuate themselves without any sense of shame around the villages fouling the atmosphere. This vast quantity of night soil weighing lakhs of tons is being wasted.

Together with this we have to appreciate that India has got the largest number of animals, bullocks, cows, buffaloes, camels etc. Their number is possibly about 25 to 30 crores. The "Cowdung" is practically wasted. It is said that India has nearly half the number of world's bovine population.

If these two valuable "Wastes" are utilized to produce Bio-gas, our villages can produce sufficient gas to replace substantially Kerosene they are now using. Bio-gas or Gobar Gas Plants were thought of and invented by our Researchers or Scientists about 30 years ago. China also has taken up construction of Bio-gas plants and during this period they have, I was told couple of years ago, constructed about 5 Million units. On the other hand we who have the largest number of animals and about 60 crores of people in the villages have only, I am told about 5 lakhs of Units. What a difference? This Bio-gas is untapped potential of non-commercial energy which is permanent. It is a sin that we have not exploited this vast amount of energy. There are other important aspects connected with the Gas. It prevents this uncultured, uncivilized, crude easing for want of latrines in the mornings and evenings around the village, women and men exposing. It is a most uncultured habit. If both night soil and cowdung and domestic wastes are used as raw material for these plants we can produce possibly 7 to 8 million tons of first class manure which can be used for any soil and which contains nearly 3 times the amount of Nitrogen of the common farm-yard manure. To add, the seeds are digested and there will be no question of weeds, which affect adversely crop production. To add to these advantages this Bio-gas be used both for lighting and cooking. It saves destruction of forests for fire-wood.

This programme of producing valuable energy and manure required according to me is about 6000 crores. The whole effort

can be undertaken and finished if there is any earnestness and eagerness to serve the rural population. It required about 10 years to finish that 600 crores every year. Considering the various advantages of this useful programme both the Central and State Governments should share the expenditure. I would like to suggest that this Bio-gas energy if possible can be utilized to advantage to produce electricity. Has any research been made in this behalf? I would like to know. Knowing the indifference towards the village I have a feeling that it has not been made. Why not research be undertaken?

Irrigation by itself inspite of the best methods of agriculture cannot solve the problem of unemployment. It is estimated I remember by Sri Palkhivala that the amount of energy wasted everyday in India is 2,000 million man hours. It means at 8 hours a day 125 million persons or 12.5 crores of people are without employment. This colossal waste of energy arising out of unemployment in the villages and even cities can be constructively utilised. This is the "Constructive Programme" on which Gandhiji laid the utmost emphasis. It means Cottage Industries. Everybody agrees that poverty among the massas is almost wholly due to unemployment. The unemployed people who are practically starved of food, semi-naked can't educate their children. The remedy as I just said is cottage industries. The biggest industry next to Agriculture which supplies one of the two of the basic needs of the man, is manufacture of cloth. It is unfortunate and pointed to the thinking of Government that in the latest policy decision on Textiles not a word is said about hand-spinning and Khadi. Gandhiji said "Spinning wheel is the queen of cottage industries" I remember that on October 2nd every year on Gandhiji Birthday the foremost Congress leaders would carry their Charakhas sit infront of him and spin. It was possibly to please the Mahatma. The attitude of these people

after they came to power never thought of khadi. It shows that they never believed in the philosophy of decentralised production of basic needs through Cottage Industries.

I make special reference of the Constructive Programme of Gandhiji as according to many it is the only panacea that can solve the problem of unemployment mostly in the rural areas. With its population of nearly 80 crores, India has nearly 80% of it, in villages, that is about 60 crores. Industries as understood are capital incentive and as technology develops, becomes less and less labour incentive. This has what happened in India. The unthinking Government and Rich Capitalists colluded and established more and more of these industries. The policy of the British Imperial Government in practically killing the local village industries specially manufacture of cloth has after Independence been extended and intensified. Cottage Industries namely Khadi that is hand-spun and hand-woven cloth, Ghani, Carpentry, Pottery, Smithy, Tanning, Cobbling etc. have all been killed or practically dying. Small number of centralised capital incentive industries have replaced them. Let me quote one or two examples how centralised production renders millions of people unemployed. Of the 100% cloth that is produced in India 99% is by mills and 1% by Khadi. It is interesting that while the Mills that produce 99% employ 13 lakhs of labourers, each getting possibly up to Rs. 1,500-00 per month, 1% of khadi employs the same 13 lakhs of people getting about 300 to 400 rupees per month. A spinning mill required on an average rupees 10 crores and employs 800 to 1,000 labourers. Whereas spinners on the Charākha invest 1,000 rupees on the latest Amber Charakha. That means a lakh of people can find employment mostly women by investing the same amount. Which do you prefer? That question has been answered by Gandhiji. I would like to give another example.

Edible oil, an essential need requires an investment of 8 to 10 crores of rupees for a modern expeller. Whereas a man who owns a Ghani requires at the most about 20,000/- rupees which means one expeller replaces, 5,000 Ghani Owners. The question once again arises which do you prefer? To give another example the leather industry. The raw-material namely leather comes mostly from villages far away from the factories. There are possibly a dozen or a few more big factories in all. They use all this leather and now require more to be imported. India produces the largest number of raw hides. From the remotest village to the leather factory raw hides are carried 500 to 1,000 kms in trucks fouling the atmosphere all the way.

This resulted in lakhs and lakhs of Harijans who were entirely dependent on this huge big decentralized production of leather goods have been rendered unemployed and poor. Which do you prefer? I now learn the Government have given licence to establish a factory with foreign capital and know - how to produce plastic shoes. This is most objectionable. But it has disclosed the attitude of Government of importing machinery from outside and to render poor village Harijans fully unemployed. These are sufficient to prove how Centralised production either private or public renders crores and crores of people unemployed.

This is not one of those countries where population is small, labour few. Here we have to employ and feed possibly 30 to 35 crores of people of ages who are to be employed. The consumer goods that can be manufactured in the village can be multiplied in addition to the three I have mentioned. Villagers can also employ carpenters, smiths, potters, soap makers, paper makers and many other necessary artisans. It is no wonder that many economists want for India labour incentive units of production.

Connected with this problem of unemployment and consequent poverty the Government of India pride themselves and loudly advertise in every media available that due to Green Revolution they have been producing about 150 million tons of foodgrains. And on account of that producing, there is quite a 20 to 30 million tons in excess of requirements. It is a travesty of truth. What actually the position is this, because of unemployment and consequent poverty the poor people in the village can't purchase sufficient food and cloth. What remains therefore in the village grain goes to the market as surplus. If these men and women have to find sufficient employment, there may be deficit.

The energy required for a working person is 3,100 to 3,200 calories. What he can afford now can produce not more than 2,000 calories. There lies the secret of food being produced in excess. Do the planners and the Government know it? Similarly village people can't purchase the required amount of cloth for healthful living. That becomes excess and we have large amount of cloth and garments worth thousands of crores for being exported no doubt towards lessening our financial liabilities. Can we afford this situation in the rural life of our citizens?

I would next draw your attention to agricultural land itself. Forest we have denuded to such an extent that instead of 33% of land area we have hardly 20% and even less. We have to build them up. It would be suicidal if we neglect this vital responsibility. The land under cultivation is, inspite of Land Reforms and Prevention of Fragmentation Acts has been so divided and fragmented that the average holding has reduced itself to about 2½ or 3 acres. No doubt there are some people, some rich land holders and men of influence avoided the law

and still own hundreds of acres. But their number is not large. If these uneconomical holdings continue we can't produce either sufficient food or sufficient raw materials for our industries. The only way according to me is to divide the whole land into economic and manageable holdings. The Centre should get utmost co-operation of the States for this programme. Economic holding for irrigated area is about six acres and for dry-farming 20 to 30 acres dependent upon its quality and incidence of monsoon. These plots must be numbered and members must be permanent. And only one person should be the owner. Laws necessary to implement this may be made. It is possible to do so and does not adversely affect others as the majority of land labourers are in a majority of tiny holders and themselves coolies. In this connection I would also like to suggest that a person should not have more than one avenue of income. If he is a Government servant he must give up his ownership of land. This should also apply to other professions. We now find many persons having quite a few avenues of income. This principle is a fair effort at Socialization.

Till now I have dealt with a few problems and remedies connected with villages. There are still many and cry for solution. I have neither time nor space.

I have pointed out in the beginning how cities have been growing bigger. One of the reasons is that all the industries with few exceptions either in the Public Sector or the Private Sector are concentrated in the cities. As a result they go on having increasing population. Therefore, social and municipal services are in doldrums. And the corporations are hard-pressed to satisfy the demands of the citizens. Every city has two faces; One showing big palaces, large houses, well-furnished, with broad roads, parks, boulevards and every other conveniences

to make life rich and luxurious The other face exhibits hundreds of slums where the poor labour population lives without any means to live even with minimum human requirements. I was once taken to one of the slums of Calcutta, to visit it while I was Congress President. The atmosphere was so foul, the people so abjectively poor, housed in indescribable hovels, men, women and children in rags except a few, that I could not stay there for a long time. I cannot forget the painful experience. I would like that every one will read the book (like a novel) dealing with life in a slum of Calcutta. Its name "Anand Nagar' (City of joy) written by one of the authors of the book "Freedom at Midnight". He is a Frenchman, I think who lived in that city of joy for some months. It disclosed every aspect of slum life. These problems arise mostly because of huge, gigantic industries located and centred in the cities. For a factory to be established and working the necessary factors are raw materials, water, transport facilities and power. Few cities have raw materials. Many of them have not sufficient water available. Road and rail transports are available in many places outside cities. Power can be made available anywhere. The worst problem is the labour problem. My suggestion is that not only no factory should be allowed to be established in the cities, even old replaceable factories should be sent out of the city. These factories should be established away from cities by nearly 25 miles and between one factory and another the distance must be about 25 miles. Regard being had to the four requirements mentioned above, these must be established in the rural areas. That will avoid the labour problems. Raw material will be available nearby. Social and municipal problems will be much less if not nil. People in the rural areas will find employment and there will be the sense of belonging developed. I am told this decentralised location is being done in other countries. Whatever it may be we can bring in India. Large and

Metropolitan cities must only be for the purpose of administration and as markets. This to me seems to be a measure of relief to avoid evils of concentration and for a more healthy life.

If production of all essential needs are to be met by local village production by the process of decentralisation, the question arises what about the existing mills? Remedy is according to me, there may be others who think like me, there may be reservation of production. Cloth of every description may be reserved for Khadi for yarns of 50 counts and below. Any cloth above 50 counts may be manufactured by mills. Then hand-spinning and hand-looms will not be dependent on subsidies and be able to stand on their own legs. Mills can take care of themselves. There was such reservation for dhotis and saris in the earlier days of Freedom. Then Gandhiji was still an influence. Thanks to influences, otherwise the attempt died.

Similarly, Ghani oil should manufacture edible oil entirely. No mill will manufacture edible oil. It is possible even at the rate of two Ghanis per village, 10 to 12 lakhs of Ghanis will work, feed families of half a crore of people. Similarly let the foot-wear of the Military and Police and their other requirements be reserved for mills. Let mills not manufacture any foot-wear and other leather requirements for the rest of society. Possibly half of the Harijan population can be employed gainfully in tanning raw-hides and manufacture foot-wear and other necessities.

These examples can be multiplied. Per capita every villager according to present prices has to spend at least Rs. 300/- on essentials that can be manufactured in the villages. For

population of a 1000/- the out-go of money will be 3 lakhs of rupees. If that can be prevented not only most villagers will be gainfully employed, villages will be self-sufficient. What is more important and meaningful they will be self-sustaining. This is a positive remedy to reduce imbalance. Space and time prevent further discussion.

Let me now deal with a few related subjects. The Prime Minister and every minister and member of the Central and State Legislatures speak very enthusiastically on the imperative necessity of fighting against the evil of corruption, graft, bribery etc. It interests me greatly and should many others that many of these who indulge in this rhetoric and the very people who go home and immediately indulge in bribery. Passing laws now to control or do away with corruption is good. Let me also earnestly suggest that an efficient, honest, purposeful machinery be set up to enquire without fuss or noise into the assets of every minister from the Prime Ministers past and present, other ministers, Chief Ministers and other State Ministers now, in their names in real property, bank balances and also benami since 20 years as also of Central, State Legislature members and Chairmen of all Government undertakings and officers from the highest to the lowest and what they were 20 years back now. This information could be obtained in one year. My estimate is nearly 70,000 at least 50,000 crores of rupees can be recovered. This is a suggestion for quick action.

So far Government servants are concerned they have after 40 years, still to develop a sense of service to the people and country. I am afraid they rarely have it. There are exceptions. In fact every department except the higher echelons of the judiciary is corrupt. The whole machinery is steeped in it. In services there is no accountability and no punishment. This

should be remedied. I often feel policy of "Hire and Fire" may be accepted in quite a few departments.

Another factor which is contributing to heavy and preventable losses are the industrial and commercial undertakings of both Central and State Governments. One wishes to know which of the undertakings have made profits and how much after deducting interests on capital, taxes and other charges except those which have no competition. The losses are colossal and will go I expect, into thousands upon thousands of crores. The important factors are having employees in every undertaking many times the number required, having incompetent, ignorant bureaucrats to manage them where technical expertise is necessary, just because they are either I.A.S. or I.P.S. or due to political pressure. One glaring example is the Road Transport in every State. The buses may as well be entrusted to individual unemployed educated young men and women and losses of a thousand crores saved. More than a lakh can be given opportunities to earn a decent living. Private buses charge less, run on rough roads, render equally good service if not better and make good profits. With charging more, good roads, the loss by Government is nearly a thousand crores. Of course corruption is there. Why the loss? Whose money? Only to benefit a few corrupt people?

Another source of heavy loss to both Centre and State is the very costly administrative machinery and heavy pay scales. I learn that the expenses of running the administration is nearly 45% of the budget. It ought not be more than 25% at the most. This is because the employees are 3 to 4 times more than are necessary. Within 10 years if no recruitment is made the reasonable number may be reached. I had tried to do so but had to very soon give up my Chief-Ministership. Government services are not a "Pinjeapol".

The Planning Commission which was not even contemplated by the Constitution has become a costly meaningless fifth wheel in the coach. I could give any number of reasons of its being unpractical, ignorant of the country's problems specially referring to rural India. The sooner it is wound up the better. No roots in the soil.

There are a few of the items and suggestions which if accepted would mean more savings of needy finances.

To sum up, I would suggest the following imbalances in our economy to a considerable extent:

1. Do not encourage capital incentive undertakings. Have a policy of labour intensive ones.

2. Within 10 years bring under irrigation 10 to 12 crores of more areas positively. It is possible if wasteful expenditure of time and money is avoided.

3. Where interest of centralised production and decentralised production clash encourage by all means the latter.

4. Gandhiji's Constructive Programme should be given the fullest encouragement so that villages are not only self-sufficient but self-sustaining.

5. Have reservations provided for cottage industries as pointed above wherever possible.

6. Have Bio-gas energy and human energy due to unemployment and also bullock energy fully utilised. Bullock-carts alone should cart agricultural produce etc. from villages to the nearest markets and not trucks. Petrol is saved.

7. Find out dishonest accumulations of all Government employees and make laws to confiscate them. Similarly of others pointed out above.

8. Have deterrent punishment for erring Government servants. Wherever possible adopt the policy of "Hire and Fire". Accountability and punishment should be enforced.

9. Prevent concentration of wealth and power.

10. Remember Gandhiji and follow him.

"Satyam Shivam Sundaram"

Nijalingappaji's life serves as an inspiration to younger generation.

..... His greatest achievement was the unification of Karnataka.

The Sharavati Project which he master-minded will be remembered as long as the mountains stand and rivers flow in the sacred land of ours.

He translated Gandhiji's ideals into practical programmes. His National economic policy is perhaps the best exposition of Gandhiji's philosophy.

At 97 Nijalingappa stands out like role model for politicians to emulate. It is a well documented biography intertwined with the tumultous history of post-Independence India.

**R. Venkataraman**
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